

CHARLES DAUDELIN - MONUMENTAL SCULPTOR

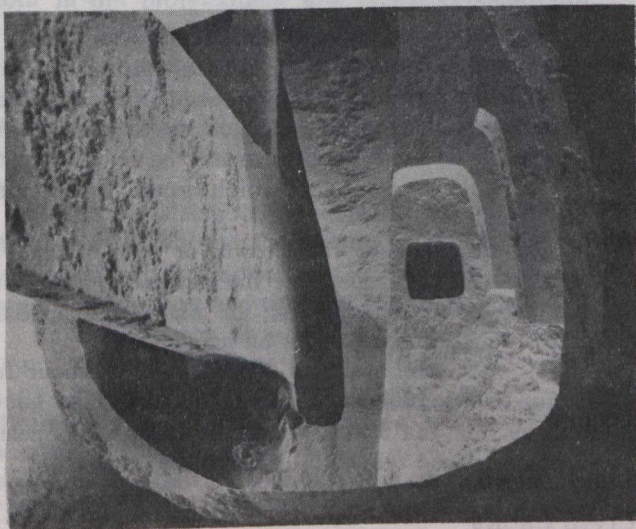
Charles Daudelin was born in Granby, Quebec, in 1920. While working in Montreal as a young man, he decided to pursue the study of art and enrolled in a course in wood sculpture at the city's Ecole du Meuble. He also took a drawing course given by Paul-Emile Borduas. In 1943, he obtained an M.A. in ceramics and casting. Daudelin was awarded a bursary in 1946 by the French Government and went to France to paint and carve in the studios of Fernand Léger and Henri Laurens.

In 1965, he won a competition for the monumental sculpture that stands on the south side of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

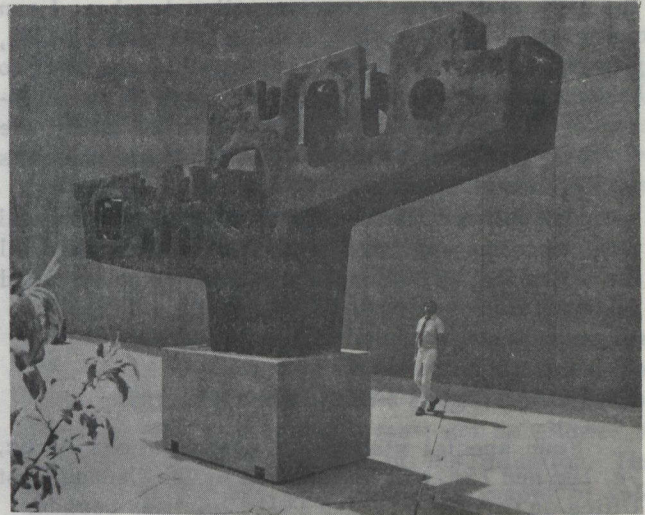
When Charles Daudelin began preparing his first models for the Arts Centre sculpture, his awareness of the nature of the building had a strong influence on the evolution of the work. Viewing the Centre's low, solid mass, he realized that it would be necessary to design the sculpture on the horizontal plane so that it would occupy a space in harmony with the shape of the building. Because of the location of the sculpture, it would have to be large enough to be clearly visible to cars passing in the street at a fairly high speed. But it must not appear so heavy that it would overwhelm people passing on foot.

After making several experimental *maquettes*, Daudelin discovered that a feeling of lightness could be achieved by placing the sculpture on a pivot and making the inside of the piece as hollow as possible. The open interior and the many apertures in the exterior create countless possibilities for combinations of light and shadow. The winter snow, too, creates interesting patterns. Daudelin mentions the joy and excitement he felt on seeing a group of youngsters scrambling about inside his work.

Despite the sculpture's tremendous weight (nine tons), it is perfectly balanced. Playing with axes



Mr. Daudelin shows how you can get inside his creations.



The sculptor inspects his work on the south terrace of the National Arts Centre.

and balance is a game Daudelin enjoys. "Meditation induces creation," he says, "and creation demands physical labour. My sculptures nearly always take form when I am in a state of dream. Anything becomes possible. Shapes superimpose themselves on each other at an unbelievable speed, and the material and the tools offer no resistance. I am at the same time both inside and outside the work."

The parts of Daudelin's sculpture create a world of shadow and of light, and people and other objects are part of that world.

The whole environment has an influence on his work. The final product is more than an adaptation of the material; it is a re-creation in which the materials, their strength, dimensions, light and weight all have an effect.

Daudelin believes that as long as a sculpture can be modified, it belongs to the artist. But as soon as it leaves the studio it is no longer his. It then lives by itself, and through others.

Sculpturing is a long process, and many sculptures exist in Daudelin's mind before one becomes real. Only one image will be made tangible and visible; the others remain latent in his mind.

Daudelin says that the sculptures that he imagines often fill his mind completely. There have been periods in his life when he was so full of ideas that he could have continued to be a sculptor without actually doing any carving. He finds it difficult to come out of the isolation that work imposes to let others participate. "There is often conflict in my mind," he says, "between the need to feel necessary and the temptation to lead an isolated self-sufficient existence. You can peacefully enjoy the pleasant things in life and share your experiences with only a few friends, but then you run the risk of feeling useless."