Norbert Jopek **Dürer and Sculpture**

Albrecht Dürer's impact and influence on other media, such as stained glass, Italian maiolica, goldsmiths' work and German stoneware is a simple fact. Research on these subjects has been steadily developed over the last 50 years through the studies of Ingeborg Krüger and David Gaimster on German stoneware, Karl Adolph Knappe, Hartmut Scholz, Barbara Butts and Lee Hendrix on stained glass, Matthias Mende and Hermann Maué on medals. Heinrich Kohlhaussen, Johann Michael Fritz, Rudolf Distelberger and Hildegard Wievelhove have expanded our knowledge on goldsmiths' work.2 Dora Thornton has further investigated Italian maiolica and its relationship to Dürer.3 Dürer and sculpture, however, is a particular minefield for scholars. There is of course general agreement that his engravings and woodcuts were widely disseminated and used in sculptor's workshops for reliefs and altarpieces from the Tyrol to Gdansk.4 In particular the generation of sculptors after Dürer were greatly indebted to his designs. These men included Gregor Erhart, Hans Daucher, Victor Kayser in Augsburg, and Loy Hering in Eichstätt who employed the soft Solnhofen limestone as an appropriate substitute for marble for small reliefs, which are more often than not based on graphic sources by Dürer.5 But this aspect is not the principal subject of my paper. Here I am primarily concerned with Dürer and his intimate and complex relationship with sculpture in general, and particularly with Sandrart's contention of 1675 that Dürer also practiced sculpture – the question of Dürer as *pictor et sculptor*. This will lead to the question of the extent of his involvement in certain sculptural projects of his time. And lastly, I would like to touch briefly on the importance of his theoretical writing for artists, which was also addressed to sculptors.

The story starts interestingly around 1600, when the figures of Adam and Eve, formerly in the collection of Cardinal Granvella, but then in the possession of Philipp Hainhofer were ascribed to Dürer. In 1609, Hainhofer had in his possession the busts of Philibert of Savoy and Margaret of Austria, today in the British Museum, which were likewise ascribed to Dürer. From then on we find numerous reliefs and small scale figures, especially in the Hapsburg collections, which feature Abrecht Dürer's monogram. The existence of such artefacts with Dürer's initials lead eventually to Joachim von Sandrart's eulogy in 1675:

nachdem die Exzellenza seiner Kunst in der Mahlerei genugsam erschollen,... sondern auch absonderlich der Bildhauerey sich beflissen und in weniger Zeit ohne sonders-grosse Bemühung so sehr darin zugenommen und es damit soweit gebracht hat, dass damals keiner von der Profession des Bildhauens ihm gleich geschätzet worden.⁷

Until the 19th and even the early 20th century Dürer's fame as a sculptor was firmly established. In the South Kensington Museum during the 1860s the criteria for the quality of German sculpture was quite simple: a piece of extraordinary quality was

always ascribed to Dürer, as for example, Veit Stoss' Virgin and Child (G. Bartrum, Dürer and his Legacy, exh. cat. British Museum, 2002, cat. no. 61); objects of high quality were given to Tilman Riemenschneider or Veit Stoss; while items of good quality were held to have been made by Jörg Syrlin the Elder, and less distinctive ones were described as in the 'manner of Adam Kraft'.8

With a more critical approach at the beginning of the last century 'Dürer's sculptural ouevre' was entirely rejected, with the sole exception of the relief in Solnhofen limestone depicting a nude female seen from the back, dated 1509 and signed AD, and now in the Metropolitan Museum. Georg Habich and Otto von Falke were in favour of Dürer's authorship of this piece, but most art historians of the 1930s regarded any attribution to Dürer as obsolete or were highly critical.9 The major exhibitions in Nuremberg on Dürer in 1928 and 1971 disregarded the subject, and even art historians after 1945 did so, with the exception of Hans Kauffmann's article of 1954, and Theodor Müller's publication of 1961, but both were more concerned with the category of retrospective works of the first half of the 17th century based on Dürer's prints. 10 This was more or less the case of the memorable exhibition in the Liebig Haus – Museum alter Plastik in Frankfurt am Main in 1981/82.11 This exhibition was the first serious attempt to assemble and examine the majority of the sculptures that were once connected with Dürer or which bear his monogram; but it also dealt broadly with the phenomenon of retrospective sculpture of the 17th century. The achievements of this exhibition were remarkable, although it contained quite a number of 19th-century fakes. It conveyed the clear message that *Dürer'sche Plastik* was mainly produced after 1600.

Jörg Rasmussen challenged this view in 1983 in his article 'Kleinplastik unter Dürers Namen'. 12 He reconsidered all the options for the relief in New York and came to the conclusion that it was designed by Dürer and executed by Ludwig Krug the Younger. When Montagu Peartree discussed the same relief in the Burlington Magazine in 1905 he had come to a similar conclusion, but had attributed the carving to Hans Daucher. 13 Ludwig Krug, who was probably born in 1490, was the son of Hans Krug who worked in the workshop of Dürer's father. Neudörfer in his Nachrichten von Künstlern und Werkleuten of 1547 reported that Ludwig Krug was a versatile artist and a skilled goldsmith, engraver, and sculptor, and that his carvings in shell and hardstone were equal to those made by the French, (here he refers to the production of shell cameos, probably made in Paris). A couple of reliefs in bronze and Solnhofen limestone housed in Cleveland and Berlin are signed LK and are stylistically close related to the relief in New York as are two engravings with nude female figures also signed LK. Although Krug executed the relief, the initial idea in the form of a drawing, executed in competition with a drawing of the same

subject by Cranach as suggested by Rasmussen, was done by Dürer himself who left the manual work to a sculptor. This article seems to be the latest contribution which deals explicitly with the subject.

It was Heinrich Wölfflin who first addressed the subject in more general terms in his book *The Art of Albrecht Dürer*, published in 1905. In the introduction he mentions Dürer's 'sculptural imagination', and further on he remarks: '

He is mainly concerned with tangible form, it is true, but within this sphere he is so strong that it is perfectly understandable that anything that is not of sculptural nature, any texture, painterly light, painterly handling of colour, could wither away. Light and colour are entirely subservient to sculpturally lucid form and do not lead an independent life. The forced awareness of sculptural qualities onto the spectator is only the first aim, the higher artistic purpose is to represent things entirely according to their true and essential nature. ¹⁴

Wölfflin does not give any examples here, because the introduction seems to be the product of long and intensive examinations of Dürer's works. We can however imagine what he meant when we have a closer look at some of Dürer's paintings and drawings. The first example is the Virgin of Sorrows of about 1495–98, now in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich (Pl. 1), which originally formed a large altar-panel together with seven smalller panels in the Gemäldegalerie in Dresden depicting the seven sorrows of the Virgin. 15 A drawing for the figure of the Virgin of about 1495 exists in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin which depicts the Virgin as a piece of sculpture set on a pedestal under a cross vault. 16 The painting is slightly different: the architectural setting has changed to a semicircular niche surmounted by an Italianate vault which is largely lost. The gothic ornaments and the tracery have disappeared, and the voluminous drapery and its colour are in contrast to the grey niche, to emphasize the sculptural features of the Virgin. A similar method was applied in the drawing monogramed and dated 1498 in a later hand. It was formerly in the Lubomirski Museum in Lemberg (Lvov) and is now preserved in the Lehmann collection at the Metropolitan Museum New York (Pl. 2). The drawing depicts a naked figure of a woman standing on an orb, probably Fortune, again in a semicircular niche. Hans Tietze and Erica Conrad Tietze, like Winkler after them, tried to explain the framing niche by likening the drawing to sculpture that Dürer might have seen in Venice. Barbara Drake Boehm, on the other hand, rightly points out, that the figure is a curious mixture of late Gothic conventions when compared to the preparatory drawing of Adam and Eve, of 1504 in the Pierpont Morgan Library. 17 She is clearly very distant from the classical proportioned nude on the preparatory drawing of Adam and Eve in the Pierpont Morgan Library. It seems therefore more convincing to suggest that the model for Fortune may have been a small-scale figure in wood made elsewhere in south Germany. This is not the place for an extensive discussion of German autonomous small-scale sculpture in the second half of the 15th century but, Nuremberg we have reason to believe that in Augsburg, Ulm, Basel and Strasbourg such figures were in demand and were more widespread than is usually thought, as they are almost always dated too late.18

The third and last example is the *Death of Lucretia* of 1518, preserved in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich (**Pl. 3**). A drawing, dated 1508 for it exists in the Albertina in Vienna (**Pl. 4**). In

1998, Gisela Goldberg suggested that this drawing was probably originally intended as a study for a sculpture-like Lucretia for a fresco- cycle, perhaps projected for the exterior or interior decoration of a house of a humanist or a town hall. It served later as a preparatory study for the painting in Munich, the contrast between the two revealing much about Dürer's different approach to the human body between 1508 and 1518. The latter painting with its elongated figure reflects clearly his advanced studies of proportions. Moreover, although the figure in the painting is no longer shown on a plinth but in a realistic interior, it nevertheless betrays an awareness of sculptural qualities in its treatment. 19

It is time now to turn to several projects in which Dürer was closely involved in providing drawings for sculptural objects. Interestingly enough all these drawings were produced between his return to Nuremberg from Italy in January 1507 and 1513/14. In 1508 Dürer provided a drawing for the frame of the Landauer altarpiece, executed in 1511. In 1510 he delivered the finished designs for the epitaphs in the Fugger chapel, Augsburg, a design for a bronze tomb for the Vischer workshop and in about 1514 several drawings for the monumental bronze statues in the Hofkirche in Innsbruck. Before I start to discuss the individual projects and drawings I would like to make some general remarks about the status of these drawings. It is to be expected that Dürer delivered highly finished designs for all these projects, as he did for the epitaphs in the Fugger chapel and for a bronze statue in Innsbruck. Several surviving preparatory studies exist for the epitaphs in Augsburg, also a sketch for the bronze statue in Innsbruck. Certain drawings for these projects represent an early idea of the design, for example that for the Landauer altarpiece, and the drawing for the Vischer workshop is certainly not the finished design. However, this is probably due to the fact that a large amount of Dürer's drawings are lost, for Matthias Mende has estimated that the 2,000 surviving drawings which represent only 10% of the artist's total production of drawings.20

Let me start with the Landauer altarpiece (Pl. 5). In about 1501 Mathäus Landauer founded the Zwölfbrüderhaus for 12 elderly and unmarried Nuremberg artisans. The chapel of All Saints was completed in 1510 and the interior decoration, which consisted of Dürer's altarpiece and a stained glass cycle, was installed in 1511. The glass cycle was formerly in the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin but was destroyed in 1945; only a drawing for one panel survives in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The painting was sold in 1585 to the emperor Rudolph II for the sum of 700 guilders and is now preserved in the Kunsthistorische Museum in Vienna, but the frame remained in Nuremberg and is now in the Germanische Nationalmuseum.²¹ The frame and the painting originally formed an iconographic and formal unity based on Dürer's drawing dated 1508 now in the Musée Condé in Chantilly (Pl. 6). Only two drawings for the painting were to survive, the portrait of Landauer in the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt and a sketch for the Holy Spirit, formerly in the Koenigs collection in Rotterdam. The first design in Chantilly however shows some distinctive discrepancies compared with the finished altarpiece. The drawing represents a characteristically Italianate version of the frame, but this influence of the Italian Renaissance is much less evident in the executed object. Arguments were introduced blaming the sculptor for the inferior quality of the frame.

However, the change to a more traditional frame accords with the late gothic architecture of the chapel. The identity of the sculptor employed by Dürer to carve his frame has always been questioned. The ascription to Veit Stoss having long been abandoned, the Tietzes suggestion that the lunette was carved by Peter Vischer the Younger and that the frieze was produced in the circle of Peter Flötner, has been rejected by Jörg Rasmussen who convincingly ascribed the whole frame to Ludwig Krug. Krug probably worked from very detailed drawings, which have unfortunately not survived, provided by Dürer, who also surely supervised this work. The Landauer altarpiece is the best example so far to show Dürer's close and successful cooperation with a sculptor. Moreover, the altarpiece represents a new type of altarpiece in Germany.²²

The cooperation with the Vischer foundry in Nuremberg may also have been similarly close but unfortunately only one relevant drawing (Christ Church Library, Oxford) has survived (**Pl.** 7).²³ This appears to be a preparatory study for a finished drawing, which was then used by a hitherto unknown sculptor who provided the Vischer foundry with the wooden model for a tomb in Hechingen in Swabia, and another one in Römhild in Thuringia for Countess Elisabeth von Brandenburg and Count Hermann von Henneberg Römhild (**Pl. 8**).²⁴

Dürer had far less influence on the execution of the epitaphs in the Fugger chapel than on those for the Landauer altarpiece. The Fugger chapel in Augsburg was originally intended as a funerary chapel where members of the family buried in the crypt beneath the altar would be commemorated through daily masses (Pl. 9). Although it had been planned as early as 1506/07, the foundation charter of 1509 marks the beginning of the building, which was finished by 1512; most of the interior decoration was finished by the time of the consecration on 17 January. But Dürer was in this case not only responsible for the epitaphs. A drawing exists for the early planning stage of the chapel in about 1507. Signed LS or SL, it was regarded as a design by Sebastian Loscher, an Augsburg sculptor, until Bruno Bushart argued convincingly that it was a copy of a design for the chapel by Dürer. So, although the drawings repeats a design of about 1506, the watermark on the paper suggests that it was probably executed around 1530. Between 1506 and 1510 Dürer had also provided six drawings for the epitaphs of Georg Fugger, who died in 1506, and Ulrich Fugger who died in 1510. Georg's epitaph features the Old Testament stories of Samson slaying the Philistines and Samson carrying away the gates of Gaza, while that of Ulrich shows the Resurrection of Christ (Pls 10 and 11). In the event, Dürer's highly sophisticated typological programme was altered and simplified for the final execution in Italian marble in the workshop of Adolf Daucher (Pls 12 and 13). The slightly inferior quality and the style of the marbles, the latter undoubtedly that of the Daucher workshop -Hans Daucher was probably only involved in the reliefs on the altarpiece and the freestanding Lamentation group - reveal that Dürer's influence on the execution was minimal.²⁵ This was certainly also the case with Dürer's designs for Maximilian's I great monument in Innsbruck, which was already being planned in 1502. No less than 40 large statues, 34 busts of Roman emperors and 100 small figures of saints, all in bronze were intended to surround the tomb in the church in Innsbruck. Of all the emperor's innumerable artistic plans this was the largest. Among other artists, Dürer was probably invited to

contribute by Maximilian on his last visit to Nuremberg in 1512. One of the figures for which he provided a drawing, which was formerly in the collection of Sir John Charles Robinson (Pl. 14), was the bronze figure of Albrecht IV of Austria (Pl. 15). The wooden model was provided by Hans Leinberger, who followed more or less the design in detail, but he added a new spatial dimension to Dürer's design. Although primarily a wood carver, Leinberger should also have cast the final piece in bronze. He received 200kg of brass but apparently failed to complete the work, and the figure was eventually cast by Stephan Godl in Innsbruck to whom Leinberger's wooden model was send in 1517.26 To sum up: Dürer was concerned with sculptural projects for less than a decade. He certainly left his impact on the medium, but his main achievement was to revolutionise the design of the altarpiece in collaboration with a sculptor in an Italianate style, which he himself called 'die neue fatzon'.

I would now like to discuss briefly the importance of his theoretical writings. I do need to mention here, that Dürer was the first German artist to write about the theoretical foundations of art, including mathemathics, proportions and how a canon of beauty could be achieved. The first edition of his *Four books on Human Proportion* was published posthumously in 1528, but during his life he was obsessed with the depiction of the human body, as many drawings testify. Let me again quote Heinrich Wölfflin: '

All the studies for the work on proportion would be incomprehensible if Dürer's artistic temperament did not have this sculptural basis. When one sees how he feels his way across the planes of his head, how he likes to turn old people with distinctive forms, and finds unending pleasure in the modelling of the swelling lips or the winding cavities of the ear, one may well be surprised that he never actually made any sculpture proper. His fingers must have itched to do so.... His workshop must have been full of sculptured models, such as occur in the Dresden sketchbook. 27

The drawing of 1519 in the Dresden sketchbook shows his interpretation of such models, and how a sculptor has to divide a block of wood into the polygons he called 'eckete corpora' (Pl. 16). The sculptural models looked like the pair of maquettes probably by Master IP of about 1520 which were together in Leipzig in the 18th century, but which were separated in the 19th century. The female figure is now preserved in the Museum für Kunsthandwerk in Leipzig (Pl. 17) while the male figure is housed in the Museum für Kunstgewerbe in Hamburg (Pl. 18). However, the small format and the delicacy of these pieces probably precluded their use in workshops. Bernhard Decker has suggested that larger maquettes were made for the use in a workshop, whereas the two figures shown here were certainly made for collectors.²⁸ In his theoretical writings Dürer demonstrates an understanding of the sculptural process that proves that he had more than an average knowledge of sculpture, and his theoretical writings are not only addressed to painters - as it is sometimes understood, but also to 'dy bildhawer oder dy van metall gissen, sy machen van holtz, stein oder andern herten dingen jn jren nutz wenden mügen aber zw ein fürung vnd berycht'.29

Notes

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Plate 1 Albrecht Dürer, *Virgin of Sorrows, c.* 1495–98. Panel painting. Munich, Alte Pinakothek. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 3 Albrecht Dürer, *Death of Lucretia*, 1518. Panel painting. Munich, Alte Pinakothek. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library

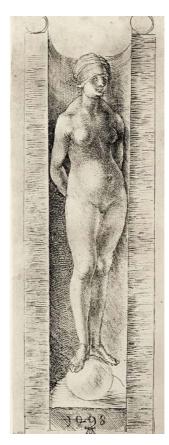


Plate 2 Albrecht Dürer, *Fortune in a Niche*, 1498. Pen and brown ink. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection. Image scanned from M. Gebarowicz and H. Tietze, *Albrecht Dürers Zeichnungen im Lubomirski-Museum in Lemberg*, Vienna, 1929

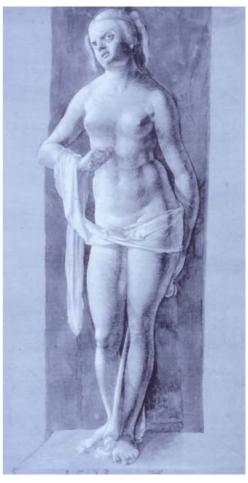


Plate 4 Albrecht Dürer, *Study for the Death of Lucretia*, 1508. Brush and grey wash heightened with white on green prepared paper. Vienna, Albertina. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 5 Albrecht Dürer, *The Landauer Altarpiece*, 1511. Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum (frame) and Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (painting). © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 7 Albrecht Dürer, *Study for a tomb, c.* 1510. Black ink. Oxford, Christ Church. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 6 Albrecht Dürer, *Study for the Landauer Altarpiece*, 1508. Pen and brown ink with watercolour. Chantilly, Musée Condé. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 8 Hermann Vischer the Younger, Tomb for Countess Elisabeth of Brandenburg and Count Hermann of Henneberg, c. 1510–12. Bronze. Römhild (Thuringia) © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 9 View of the Fugger chapel, completed in 1518, in the church of St Anna, Augsburg. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 10 Albrecht Dürer, *Samson slaying the Philistines*, design for the epitaph of Georg Fugger, *c*, 1506–10. Brush and grey wash heightened with white on grey prepared paper. Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Kupferstichkabinett. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 11 Albrecht Dürer, *The Resurrection of Christ*, design for the epitaph of Ulrich Fugger, *c*. 1506–10. Brush and grey wash heightened with white on grey prepared paper. Vienna, Albertina. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 12 Workshop of Adolf Daucher, marble epitaph for Ulrich Fugger, c. 1515. Augsburg, Fugger chapel. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 13 Workshop of Adolf Daucher, marble epitaph for Georg Fugger, c. 1515. Augsburg, Fugger chapel. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 14 Albrecht Dürer, *Design for the bronze figure of Albrecht IV of Austria, c.* 1512. Pen and black ink with watercolour. Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbsitz, Kuperstichkabinett. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 15 Stephan Godl, Albrecht IV of Austria, c. 1517/18. Bronze. Innsbruck, Hofkirche. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library

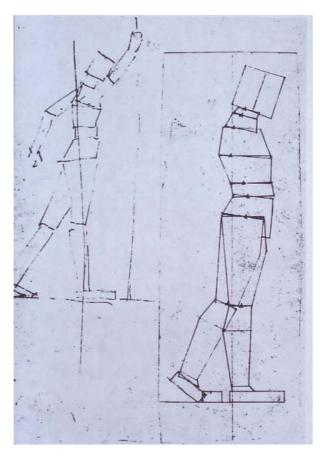


Plate 16 Albrecht Dürer, *Study of a sculptured model*, 1519. Pen and ink. Dresden, Sächsische Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 17 Master IP, Female maquette figure, c. 1520–30. Wood. Leipzig, Museum für Kunsthandwerk. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library



Plate 18 Master IP, Male maquette figure, c. 1520–30. Fruit wood. Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe. © Victoria and Albert Museum Picture Library