George Segal (November 26, 1924 – June 9, 2000) was an American painter and sculptor associated with the Pop Art movement. He was presented with a National Medal of Arts in 1999.

**Works**

Although Segal started his art career as a painter, his best known works are cast lifesize figures and the tableaux the figures inhabited. In place of traditional casting techniques, Segal pioneered the use of plaster bandages (plaster-impregnated gauze strips designed for making orthopedic casts) as a sculptural medium. In this process, he first wrapped a model with bandages in sections, then removed the hardened forms and put them back together with more plaster to form a hollow shell. These forms were not used as molds; the shell itself became the final sculpture, including the rough texture of the bandages. Initially, Segal kept the sculptures stark white, but a few years later he began painting them, usually in bright monochrome colors. Eventually he started having the final forms cast in bronze, sometimes patinated white to resemble the original plaster.

Segal's figures had minimal color and detail, which gave them a ghostly, melancholic appearance. In larger works, one or more figures were placed in anonymous, typically urban environments such as a street corner, bus, or diner. In contrast to the figures, the environments were built using found objects. An example of this work is the sculpture, *Chance Meeting*, which sold in 2001 for US $600,000. It was one of his highest selling works. The work was created in 1989 and was cast in bronze.①
George Segal (artist)

Life

From the 1950s until his death Segal lived on a chicken farm in South Brunswick Township, New Jersey.[2] He only ran the chicken farm for a few years, but he used the space to hold annual picnics for his friends from the New York art world. His location in central New Jersey also led to friendships with professors from the Rutgers University art department. Segal introduced several Rutgers professors to John Cage, and took part in Cage's legendary experimental composition classes. Allan Kaprow coined the term Happening to describe the art performances that took place on Segal's farm in the Spring of 1957. Events for Yam Fest also took place there. Segal was married to Helen Segal from 1946 until his death in 2000.

Films

• *George Segal* (1979). Directed by Michael Blackwood. Documentary about Segal, who discusses and is shown creating his bronze sculpture *Abraham and Isaac*, which was originally intended as a memorial for the Kent State shootings of 1970.

• *George Segal: American Still Life* (2001). Directed by Amber Edwards. Documentary about the life and work of the internationally acclaimed sculptor, whose trademark life-size plaster casts are familiar to art lovers and ordinary citizens all over the world. USA Today called him "a cultural icon." Segal's sculptures are in major museums and public spaces throughout the country, from the FDR Memorial in Washington to the Holocaust Memorial in San Francisco. Through scenes of him at work casting a model in his studio, interviews with fellow artists, critics and historians, Segal's own thoughtful analysis, and rare archival footage of the Pop Art movement in the '60s, the documentary tells the story of one man's search for a unique way to express himself.

Honors and awards


References

Notes


Bibliography


External links

- George and Helen Segal Foundation
- The George Segal Papers at Princeton University (http://diglib.princeton.edu/ead/getEad?id=ark:/88435/tx31qh77q)
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