

1

Marnie Elliott

Maryon Kantaroff est une femme sculpteur dont la réputation s'accroît au Canada ainsi qu'à l'étranger. Récemment, une de ses sculptures a été érigée à l'ambassade du Canada à Mexico et on vient de lui commander une sculpture de quarante pieds de haut à Winnipeg.

When Maryon Kantaroff, internationally renowned Canadian sculptor, created Pasiphae*, little did she know that one year later it would be installed in front of the new Canadian Embassy in Mexico City.

The name Pasiphae alludes to the Greek myth in which Poseidon, punished Minos (King of Crete) for refusing to sacrifice a prize bull, by causing Minos' wife Pasiphae to fall

Inviting The Eye Inside:

Maryon Kantaroff

in love with the animal.

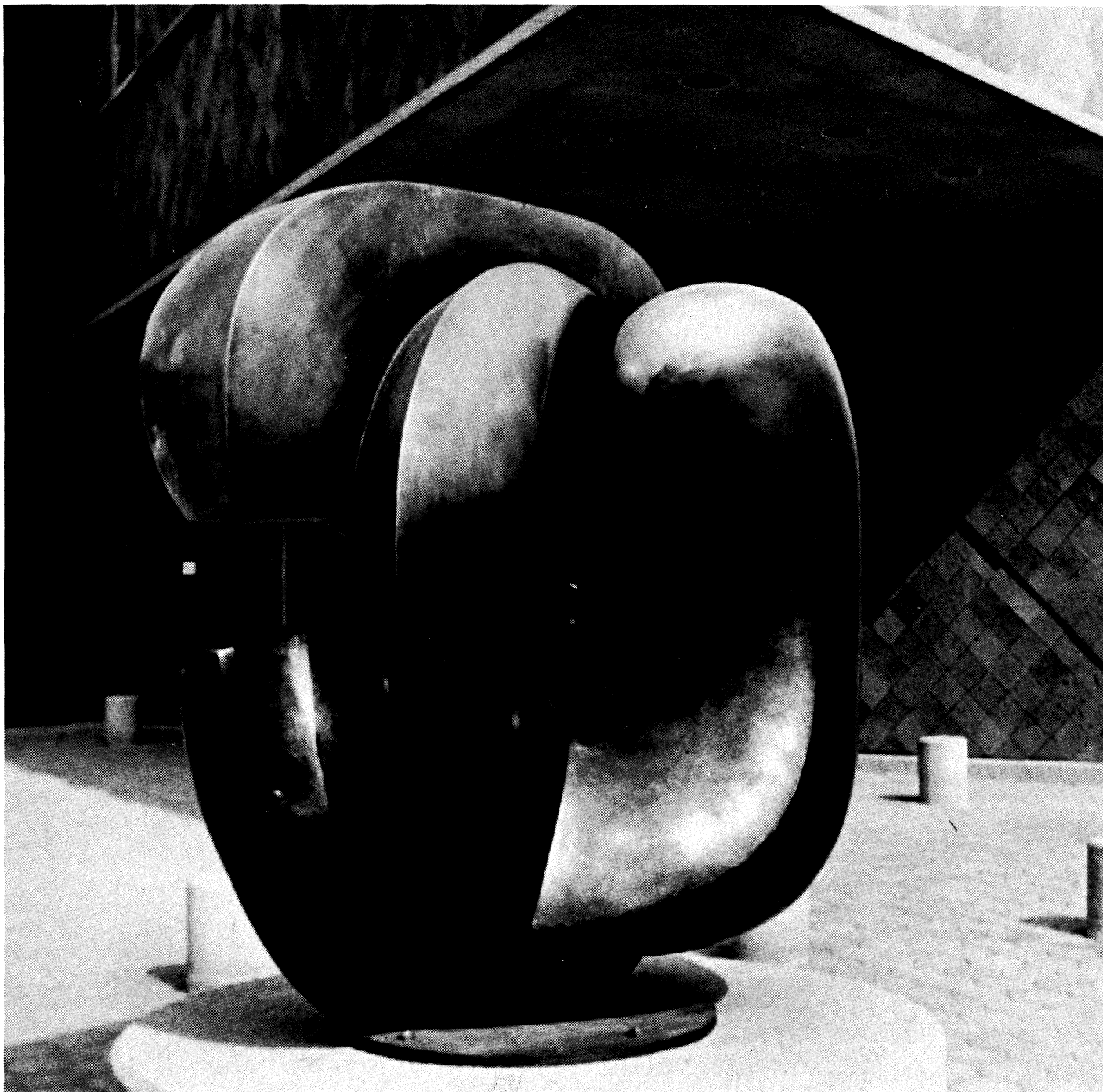
When Winnipeg architect Etienne Gaboury came to Kantaroff seeking a sculpture to compliment his new building, time was already short — barely six months to complete a

large work. There was no time to design maquettes for the architect's approval. The only hope was an existing sculpture suited to the site. Gaboury chose Pasiphae.

Kantaroff then scaled the original 7' by 5' sculpture to its eventual 6' by 6' size. Although she operates her own foundry in Toronto (servicing others as well), it is not equipped to handle works weighing over 1,000 pounds. Pasiphae ranged around the one ton mark, so casting it there was out of the question.

Since she always used the Morris Singer foundry in England for major pieces, she flew there immediately to begin the scale-up which took three full weeks of 18 hour days and then the foundry began casting.

Constant contact via telephone and photos between Kantaroff and the foundry ensured an exciting bronze sculpture. It was delivered to Mexico City and Kantaroff



2

followed so that both she and the architect could collaborate on exact placement in relation to the Embassy building. They spent a day walking around the piece, changing angles minutely, until they decided on its final site.

The location chosen for the embassy itself provides a strong focus for both the building and the sculpture. Built on a radiating spoke of one of the three tree-lined boulevards in the heart of Mexico City, both the Embassy and the

sculpture can be viewed from numerous approaches.

Pasiphae has within it, numerous openings, constantly inviting the eye inside. The spaces read as strongly as the forms. Thus, the eye is pulled forward into the sculpture, then through the spaces and onto the soft stone building behind, blending the two into one harmonious unit.

The unveiling took place in December 1981 at the official opening of the new Canadian Embassy.

Pasiphae is an outstanding example of Canadian art abroad. Kantaroff is now working on one of the largest bronze sculptures in Canada, if not in the world at 28 tons and four storeys high. It is proposed for a major site in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This marks one of the highest points in Kantaroff's career.

1 Maryon Kantaroff

2 *Pasiphae*, Kantaroff, 1981