

The Legacy Continues.....

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Wildcattersthrough the eyes of a collector—

This particular oil well changed the history of oil production in the United States and later the history of oil production around the world. People from all over the world learned the lessons gained from Beaumont at Spindletop and in other East Texas oil fields.

My grandfather had been a wildcatter, as had some of his older brothers. They had wildcatted not only in East Texas, but also in West Texas as well, and were some of the first people out in the western part of the state to do so.

I have a photograph of my grandfather wearing these laced-up boots that you see depicted on one of the figures in Gib's sculpture. That immediately caught my attention and I said, 'This is reality.' Gib must have researched the accouterments of the trade. The wildcatters gravitated to those tall lace-up boots, because they were working in the muddy oilfields.



Wildcatters were victims of the so-called 'hot bed' trade, where one man would get out of his bed early in the morning, and another oilfield worker would come in from his shift, slathered in dirt and oil, and crawl right into the previous worker's hot, sweaty, unmade bed. The process was continuous. There were few bathtubs, showers or other amenities for the workers. They prized their boots, however, and Gib's depiction of the men in rumpled clothes and boots struck me as realistic.

Even though you don't see an oil derrick in this piece, you see an oilfield worker leaning on a shovel like the ones they used every day. You see the drilling pipe in the background. You see the rope.

My grandfather talked about going up into the wooden derricks, as he loved being up high where he could look over the tree tops. He remembered pulling up the sections of derrick timbers and drilling pipe with rope, like you see depicted in Gib's work.

It just was a great piece that appealed to me. I knew I had to have it.

.....and thankfully I do. —Monte Monroe



SINGLETON

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a Self-Portrait

*For a long time I thought this piece was lost.
I wanted to make one for each of the kids, because I wanted to leave them something of me.*

I was in hospice, knocked out on morphine, and my friends all figured I wasn't coming back because that's what happens when you go to hospice, right? So they came over to the house and hauled a bunch of stuff away, including a lot of my waxes. So, I figured they were lost. And, you know, when that kind of stuff happens you just have to let it go and move on. Hell, I was grateful just to be alive.

And that's when Paul Zuger reminded me that he had come down from Denver to see me in Hospice, and he had saved and stored this piece and a few others for me. Well, I was thrilled, man. It's a damn good little bronze, and it's important to me. In fact, I'd like to have one for myself.

It shows me at work in my studio, using a hammer and chisel to carve the face of Christ face into a block of stone. It's a self-portrait of me sculpting the image that's been with me most of my life, and that I've been working on in one form or another for the last 50 years. I figured that was as representative of me as anything I could do. The image of me is maybe at about age 65 or so, and I really like it. It kind of reminds me that I was young once, too. —Gib Singleton

Self-Portrait edition of 77,
18 × 10 × 8 inches