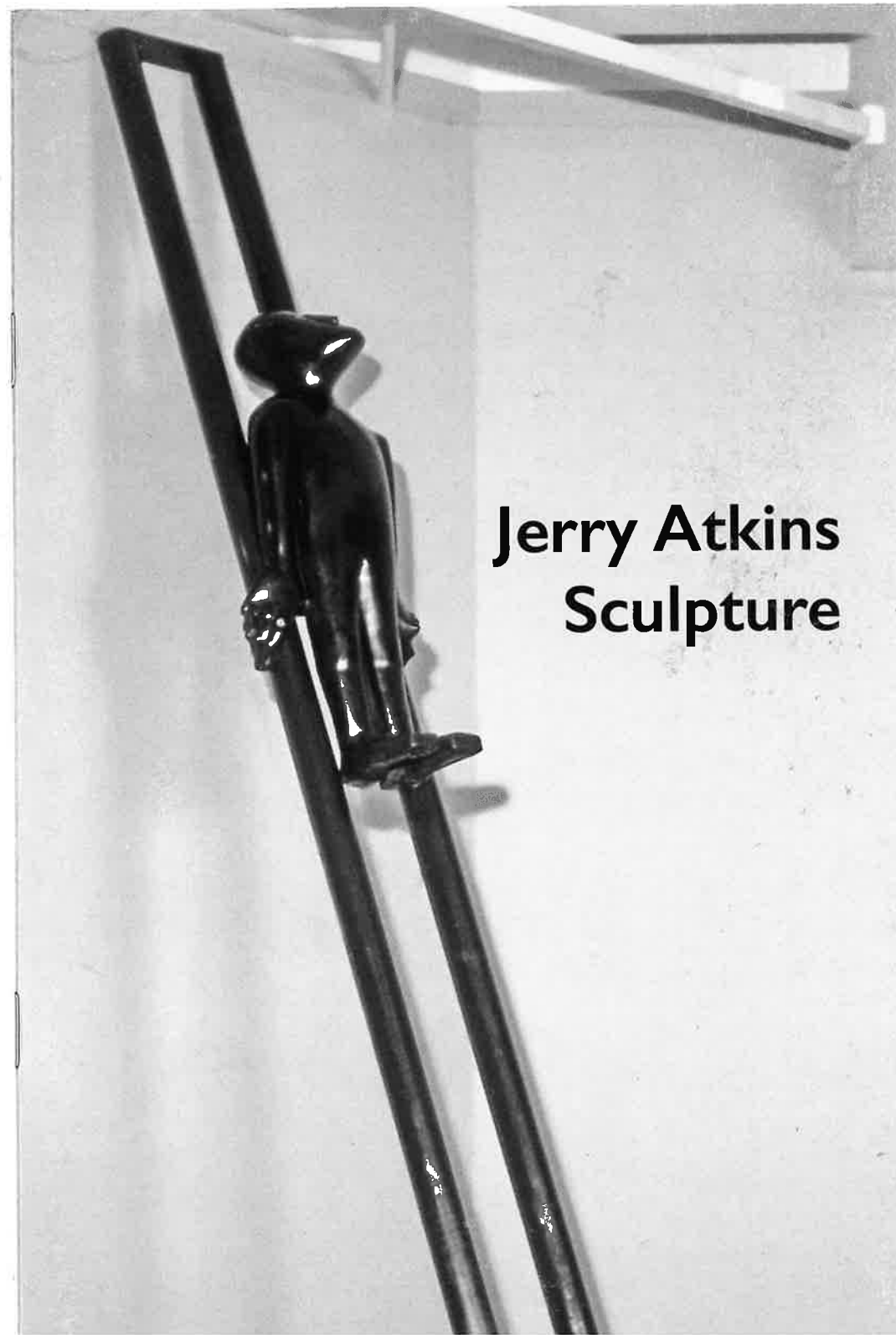




*For more information about the artist,  
additional examples of his work,  
and contact details,  
visit [www.JerryAtkins.com](http://www.JerryAtkins.com)*

Above: *War*, cast bronze, 28" x 36" x 4"  
Front Cover: *Man with Two Poles*, cast bronze, 130" x 15" x 12"



## **Jerry Atkins Sculpture**

## Jerry Atkins

born July 6, 1939 in Brooklyn, NY  
lives and works in New York City and in Egg Harbor, NJ

### Education

- 1961 B.A. - Rutgers University, Newark, NJ
- 1965 M.D. - NYU Medical School, New York, NY
- 1970 McNay Art Institute, San Antonio, TX

### Solo Exhibitions

- 1990 Private Studio Exhibition, WCOU Walls, New York, NY
- 1986 Kraushaar Galleries, New York, NY
- 1983 Kraushaar Galleries, New York, NY
- 1982 Kornblatt Gallery, Washington, DC
- 1981 Kraushaar Galleries, New York, NY
- 1977 Roko Gallery, New York, NY

### Group Exhibitions

- 2017 January Salon Show, The Greenpoint Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
- 2016 SHIM Pop-Up Exhibition, 481 Washington Street, New York, NY
- 2011 Sources • Origins, Bancroft Gallery, South Shore Art Center, Cohasset, MA
- 2010 Annual Northeast Juried Exhibition, Washington Art Association, Washington Depot, CT
- 2009 Dwellings, Still Point Art Gallery, Brunswick, ME
- 2009 Gesture, Action, Expression & Animal Nation, Caladan Gallery, Cambridge, MA
- 2009 ArtPrize, Brass Works Building, Grand Rapids, MI
- 2009 What's the Big Idea?, Northbrook Library, Wheaton, IL
- 2009 A Show of Heads, Limner Gallery, Hudson, NY
- 1981 Woodstock Artists Association, Woodstock, NY
- 1980 Group Show, Kraushaar Galleries, New York, NY
- 1979 Group Show, Art Latitude Gallery, New York, NY
- 1971 Group Show, Sol Del Rio Gallery, San Antonio, TX
- 1970 40th Annual Group Exhibition, Witte Memorial Museum, San Antonio, TX

## Biography

Jerry Atkins' extensive work as a sculptor is deeply rooted in his ideas about the human psyche and his own sense of self. As a young man, initial interests in science, particularly psychology, led Atkins towards a career in psychiatry. He completed his undergraduate studies in Chemistry at Rutgers University in 1961, and later received a medical degree from New York University and a certification in psychoanalysis.

All the while, Atkins' creative interests were a constant source of fulfillment. When uninspired by his course work as a medical student, he often skipped classes to attend pottery workshops, honing in on his natural talent for sculpture.

His formal artistic studies began at the McNay Art Institute in San Antonio, Texas, where he continued to learn ceramic technique. Recognition of his work came immediately in 1970 at the Witte Memorial Museum in San Antonio. His sculpture *Dead Animal Box* was included in an exhibition and awarded a sculpture prize by a jury led by David Winfield Scott, founding Director of the National Gallery of Art.

Motivated by his achievements, Atkins soon returned to New York City and established a studio practice in Woodstock, NY in tandem with a practice as a psychoanalyst. In his initial work as a ceramic sculptor, Atkins created mythical animal forms which he fired in the large catenary arch kiln he built at his studio. As his interests grew and his artistic techniques developed, he began to concentrate on stylized human forms representing authoritative, interpretive renditions of all aspects of the human condition. Since the 1980s, he has cast his work in bronze and resin editions of five.

Critics have praised Atkins' ability to capture and portray a wide range of emotion and human feeling in startling new and creative forms. He has been represented by three galleries in New York City: The Roko Gallery for two years, Art Latitude Gallery for one year, and The Kraushaar Galleries for twenty years. At the Kraushaar Galleries, his work was exhibited in three solo exhibitions and numerous group shows. Atkins' work was also previously represented by the Kornblatt Gallery in Washington D.C.

Following Antoinette Kraushaar's retirement in 1988, Atkins left the Kraushaar Galleries to pursue new visions in the development of his work. He maintains an active studio practice producing new work, and regularly seeks new exhibition opportunities.



*Self Portrait*, cast bronze, 18" x 17" x 15"



*Self Portrait, 20 Yrs Old*, cast bronze, 12" x 8" x 8"



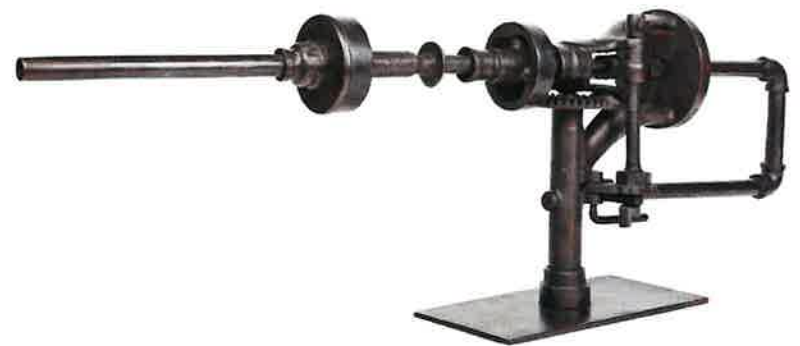
*Two Creatures, cast resin, 14" x 16" x 20"*



*Thumb Suckers, ceramic, 11" x 14" x 10"*



*Figure in a Cage*, cast bronze and steel, 24" x 24" x 18"



*Gun*, cast bronze, 13" x 38" x 7"

## Distress Signals

Statement by Wilson Duggan, artist and curator

Throughout Jerry Atkins' four-decade career as a sculptor, his artworks have been preoccupied by his interest in the darker side of man's emotional experience. Physical and psychological agony, understood from an existentially nihilistic point of view, has been the subject of his work from his earliest days learning ceramic technique in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Atkins addresses these themes through depictions of simple, abstract human and animal forms in states of physical and psychological distress. His characters are stripped down to their most basic elements - limbs, torso, and head, eyes, nose, and mouth - in a rough, caricatured style. Atkins draws the viewer's attention away from accurate formal representation, instead emphasizing emotional articulations through his figures' poses and body language.

*Thumb Suckers* and *Two Creatures*, two of Atkins' earlier works, balance the subtle relationship between sympathy and empathy in the viewer. In the former, two ceramic figures, one slightly larger than the other, sit next to each other in identical poses, hands at their mouths and sucking their thumbs. The piece conveys the innocence and vulnerability associated with behavior often understood as a child's physical/emotional defense mechanism against anxiety. The formally generic figures and reference to a child's emotional state relate to the viewer's own experience on multiple levels.

In *Two Creatures*, two bronze animal figures stand side by side, similar in size and form but with different poses. The quadruped animal form is abstracted past the point of recognition as a particular type of animal; these figures appear often in Atkins' oeuvre, identified simply as "creatures." Here, like in *Thumb Suckers*, the two figures' postures and relationships to each other convey vulnerability and companionship, trading the viewer's compassion for a child's innocence with a reaction to the natural innocence of an animal, generalized to provide a screen for the viewer's own projections.

Atkins' more recent piece *Self-Portrait* offers a more overt depiction of physical trauma than some of his other work. The bronze sculpture features a rough human figure bent over on its hands and feet in a physically vulnerable position. Clamped around the figure's torso is a mechanical screw press, larger than the figure itself, which is tightened like a medieval torture device. The physical anguish conveyed by the piece is personalized through its title, and thus the generic human form, identified as the artist, simultaneously draws sympathy and empathy from the viewer.

*Self-Portrait, 20 Years Old* is another overt depiction of pain. A short, squat figure, cast in bronze with a head and limbs barely articulated, is pierced through its

head by a rod, which is attached to a mechanical contraption with various gears and bolts. The injury incapacitates the figure, its rudimentary form and squeezed posture indicating a physical/emotional barrier or isolation.

Some of Atkins' sculptures address these themes by incorporating other elements or devices. In *Figure in a Cage*, a cast bronze human figure, more anatomically detailed than some of Atkins' simpler forms, crouches inside of a square cage structure, gripping the steel bars below it with its hands. A subtler psychological theme is at play in this piece, through the device of the cage. Though surrounded by the steel structure, the figure inside is clearly not contained or confined by it; the bars are wide enough apart to pass through were the figure real. The sculpture references not a physical trap, but the illusion of confinement that the mind can impose in a state of mental distress.

This combination of physical and psychological distress is similarly the focus of another of Atkins' sculptures, *War*, a wall-mounted flat bronze rectangular plate with six long, exaggerated faces protruding in relief. Three of the faces feature gaping mouths, as if screaming or crying out. The other three feature blank expressions, with no mouths, suggesting silence or an inability to communicate at all. As the title suggests, these two reactions, screams and stunned silence, convey the horrible physical and psychological toll of warfare.

*Gun*, a bronze piece cast from an assemblage of pipes, gears, and other mechanical components, references a similar theme. In a different context, the piece could easily be read as a fantastical or whimsical interpretation of a weapon, but within Atkins' body of work, a dark reference to the mechanisms of violence are unavoidable.

Finally, *Man with Two Poles*, featured on the cover, is a cast bronze human figure suspended between two large metal poles, each 10 feet in length, which it clutches at its sides. The figure features an exaggerated facial expression, with its neck contorted to the side as if in physical pain or an expression of fear.

Atkins' work glimpses a point of view aware of its own fragility and seeking solace in the creative expression of feelings otherwise not easily described. The suspended figure in *Man with Two Poles* represents a fitting summary of Atkins' preoccupations. He is precariously suspended in physical space, but also trapped in a state of mind: the totally overwhelming and immediate sensation that pain or anxiety commands, which can neutralize all other thought. This immediacy is what strikes the viewer, a trigger for their own feelings and experiences mutually felt, not simply understood.