



Questions 8–15

With Robert Laurent and William Zorach, direct carving enters into the story of modern sculpture in the United States. Direct carving—in which the sculptors themselves carve stone or wood with mallet and chisel—must be recognized as something more than just a technique. Implicit in it is an aesthetic principle as well:

- (5) that the medium has certain qualities of beauty and expressiveness with which sculptors must bring their own aesthetic sensibilities into harmony. For example, sometimes the shape or veining in a piece of stone or wood suggests, perhaps even dictates, not only the ultimate form, but even the subject matter.

The technique of direct carving was a break with the nineteenth-century tradition in which the making of a clay model was considered the creative act and the work was then turned over to studio assistants to be cast in plaster or bronze or carved in marble. Neoclassical sculptors seldom held a mallet or chisel in their own hands, readily conceding that the assistants they employed were far better than they were at carving the finished marble.

- (15) With the turn-of-the-century Arts and Crafts movement and the discovery of nontraditional sources of inspiration, such as wooden African figures and masks, there arose a new urge for hands-on, personal execution of art and an interaction with the medium. Even as early as the 1880s and 1890s, nonconformist European artists were attempting direct carving. By the second decade of the twentieth century, Americans—Laurent and Zorach most notably—had adopted it as their primary means of working.

Born in France, Robert Laurent (1890–1970) was a prodigy who received his education in the United States. In 1905 he was sent to Paris as an apprentice to an art dealer, and in the years that followed he witnessed the birth of Cubism, discovered primitive art, and learned the techniques of woodcarving from a frame maker.

- (25) Back in New York City by 1910, Laurent began carving pieces such as *The Priestess*, which reveals his fascination with African, pre-Columbian, and South Pacific art. Taking a walnut plank, the sculptor carved the expressive, stylized design. It is one of the earliest examples of direct carving in American sculpture. The plank's form dictated the rigidly frontal view and the low relief. Even its irregular shape must have appealed to Laurent as a break with a long-standing tradition that required a sculptor to work within a perfect rectangle or square.



8. The word “medium” in line 5 could be used to refer to
- (A) stone or wood
 - (B) mallet and chisel
 - (C) technique
 - (D) principle
9. What is one of the fundamental principles of direct carving?
- (A) A sculptor must work with talented assistants.
 - (B) The subject of a sculpture should be derived from classical stories.
 - (C) The material is an important element in a sculpture.
 - (D) Designing a sculpture is a more creative activity than carving it.
10. The word “dictates” in line 8 is closest in meaning to
- (A) reads aloud
 - (B) determines
 - (C) includes
 - (D) records
11. How does direct carving differ from the nineteenth-century tradition of sculpture?
- (A) Sculptors are personally involved in the carving of a piece.
 - (B) Sculptors find their inspiration in neoclassical sources.
 - (C) Sculptors have replaced the mallet and chisel with other tools.
 - (D) Sculptors receive more formal training.
12. The word “witnessed” in line 23 is closest in meaning to
- (A) influenced
 - (B) studied
 - (C) validated
 - (D) observed
13. Where did Robert Laurent learn to carve?
- (A) New York
 - (B) Africa
 - (C) The South Pacific
 - (D) Paris
14. The phrase “a break with” in line 30 is closest in meaning to
- (A) a destruction of
 - (B) a departure from
 - (C) a collapse of
 - (D) a solution to
15. The piece titled *The Priestess* has all of the following characteristics EXCEPT:
- (A) The design is stylized.
 - (B) It is made of marble.
 - (C) The carving is not deep.
 - (D) It depicts the front of a person.