

SAMPLE-SHORT PAPER 3 FINAL DRAFT

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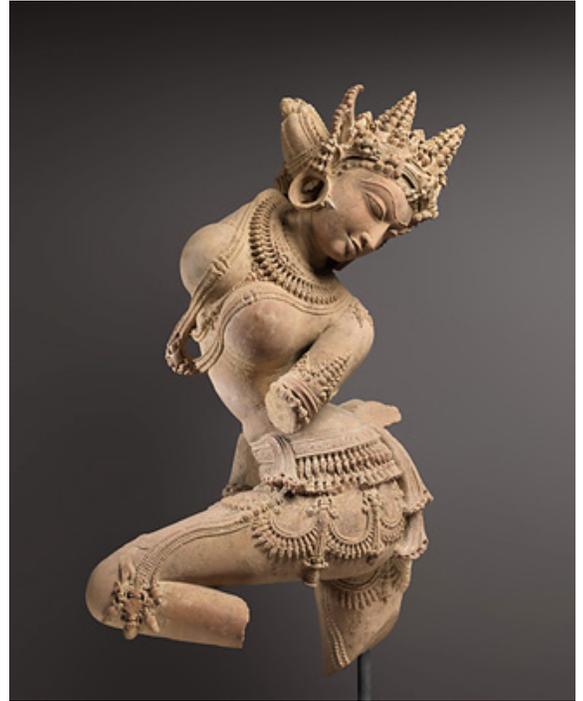


Figure 1. Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913, casted 1950. Bronze, 47 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 35 x 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (121.3 x 88.9 H. 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (85.1 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Figure 2. Unknown, *Dancing Celestial Deity (Devata)*, Early 12th century. Sandstone, 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (85.1 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Introduction

The concept of movement has long been of interest to artists, as employing static means to demonstrate motion necessitated a creative approach. Throughout time, different artists within varying societies attempted to portray movement in an effort to invoke a reflection of reality. During the 12th century, Indian sculptors tried to mimic human motion to give life to their sculptures. In *Dancing Celestial Deity*, the artist depicts “an extraordinary rendering of a heavenly celebrant, performing in honor of the gods” and gives her life-like features as well as details suggesting movement in order to ground the celestial figure in reality.¹ In the wake of the technological innovations that advanced transportation in the late 19th and early 20th century, “movement was a key element for Boccioni and the other Futurists, as the technology of transportation allowed people to experience ever greater speeds.”² Boccioni, the most famous artist of the Futurist group, “wanted to create singular forms that expressed movement” with *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, a sculpture that achieves this goal, “considered the pinnacle of his sculptural activity.”³ With these explorations in depicting movement, it is evident that the understanding of motion evolved over time, illustrated by the stylistic differences between Figure 1 and 2. The sculptors of *Unique Forms* and *Dancing Celestial Deity* strove to convey movement through balance and orientation.

subjectarguments*thesis*→claim*Section 1:**p1 -visual
description
of figure 1*

Boccioni masterfully used the mass, volume, and texture of *Unique Forms* as indicators of motion. The piece represents an anthropomorphic, stylized figure stepping forward. Even though it is the sculpture in the round, the piece imposes an inherent directionality through its distribution of mass and volume. The surface is composed of organic, faceted volumes with polished texture. Lamp suggests additional details that symbolize motion: “the exaggerated length of the figure’s stride” and “the forward focus of the head.”⁴ Through the length of the stride, the forward motion of the figure as well as the fast-pace of the figure is amplified, as if the figure is running through time. The forward focus of the head, polished surface, and the forward motion of the body imply a direct movement that the figure is taking along a forward path. With these compositional decisions, Boccioni continuously reinforces a forward, rapid motion.

*p2 -visual
description
of figure 2*

Multi-volumed *Dancing Celestial Deity* represents a stylized female figure. Most of the piece is preserved, but parts of her limbs are missing. With a contorted body, that accentuates her voluptuous breasts and buttocks, the devata was composed with an anatomically impossible stance, revolving around a central axis. This serves to exaggerate her stance, which invokes a scene of movement, in which the sculptor captured the rotating motion. In regards to the smaller details of the sculpture, the artist injects motion into the ornaments

¹ Mark Polizzotti, *Recent Acquisitions, a Selection: 2014-2016* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2016), 21.

² Ibid., 22.

³ Ibid. 22.

⁴ Lucy Lamp, “Elements of Art: Movement and Time,” SOPHIA Learning, 2017, accessed September 29, 2017, <https://www.sophia.org/tutorials/elements-of-art-movement-and-time>.

within the piece. Polizzotti iterated this ornamental movement in *Recent Acquisitions, a Selection: 2014-2016*: “this divine dancer moves with such energy that her jewelry swings dramatically, emphasizing the movement of her full breasts and strong hips.”⁵ The jewelry on the devata, specifically her necklace, look as though they are in mid-motion, just as their wearer, as they are lifted off of the figure or out of place. This placement augments the rhythmic, dancing motion intended by the sculptor.

Section 2:

p3 - persuasive
discusses balance
of figure 1
topic sentence →

evidence

analysis

evidence

analysis

concluding
sentence →

In Boccioni’s *Unique Forms*, the asymmetrical balance achieved by an uneven distribution of volumes suggests a propulsion of the figure, prompting the perception of movement. Boccioni positioned the heavier, abstract volumes towards the left of the sculpture, creating an unbalanced arrangement. As a result, the figure looks like it’s leaning towards the left, blurred as though it were caught in the middle of moving forward. The pinched endings of the volumes resemble air moving past the figure, suggesting an especially fast speed in which the figure is moving. Boccioni thus “brings together the movement of the striding figure with that of the displaced air around that figure.”⁶ With these organic volumes and their unbalanced placements, the undefined figure is seemingly undulating under the pressure of movement, as though it’s being sculpted by speed rather than by hand. Through asymmetry, Figure 1’s volumes create the illusion that the figure is rapidly moving forward through space.

p4 - persuasive
discusses balance
of figure 2
topic sentence →

evidence

analysis

concluding
sentence →

& comparison
to the previous
paragraph

The sculptor of figure 2 employed symmetry through their arrangement of volumes around a central axis, to imply a rotational motion of the figure. In *Dancing Celestial Deity*, the heavier volumes – the head, breasts, buttocks and left leg – are distributed evenly around a central axis. With this equal distribution around an axis, “the dancer’s body is contorted in an improbable pose, her legs projecting right as her upper torso and head turn sharply left.”⁷ This symmetry exaggerates the twirling stance of the figure further amplifying the apparent movement of the dancer. Unlike asymmetrical balance of *Unique Forms* that communicates the rapid, forward movement, the symmetrical, central arrangement of figure 2’s volumes serves to emulate the round motion of a spinning dancer.

⁵ Polizzotti, *Recent Acquisitions*, 21.

⁶ Rosalind McKeever, “Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916),” The Met’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, August 2016, accessed September 29, 2017, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/umbo/hd_umbo.htm.

⁷ Polizzotti, *Recent Acquisitions*, 21.

Section 3:

p5 -persuasive
discusses
orientation of
figure 1
topic sentence →

evidence

analysis

concluding
sentence →

Through the orientation of *Unique Forms*, Boccioni enabled a more intimate relationship between the sculpture and the viewer. According to Leonard Rogers, sculpting in the round “invite[s] the viewer to think of [the sculpture] as a detached, independent object that has no fixed base and is designed all around.”⁸ As a result of sculpting figure 1 as a freestanding, multi-dimensional piece, Boccioni permitted the viewer to penetrate the sculptural space. This inevitably causes viewers to associate the figure with the human condition and assign human qualities to the sculpture, specifically motion. Additionally, as the viewer moves around the sculpture, the figure is seemingly always moving either away from them (if they are viewing it from three of its sides) or towards (if they are viewing from the sculptures left side). Thus, Boccioni’s choice to emphasize the movement by employing the technique of sculpting in the round animates the piece.

p6 - persuasive
discusses orienta-
tion of figure 2

topic sentence →

evidence

analysis
& comparison

concluding
sentence →
& comparison
to the previous
paragraph

Similarly, the orientation of *Dancing Celestial Deity* facilitates the reading of a rotating, dancing figure. By sculpting in the round, the artist “compels the viewer to walk all around it in order to grasp its spatial design.”⁹ In sculpting in the round, the sculptor exploits the visibility of the figure to propagate the seemingly spinning motion of the dancer. As the viewer revolves around the sculpture, the figure looks as though it is spinning in the opposite way, unlike Boccioni’s piece that looks like either moving towards or from the viewer as they change their position. In deciding to sculpt in the round, the artists of *Unique Forms* and *Dancing Celestial Deity* project the viewers’ movement onto the sculpture; however, even though the viewers’ movement may not differ much when viewing each sculpture, the implied movement of the *Unique Forms* projects the linear path while *Dancing Celestial Deity* suggests circular motion.

Conclusion

For the artists of figure 1 and figure 2, expressing motion served as the crucial theme of their piece. In *Unique Forms*, its form and the organic volumes within allowed viewers to perceive movement in the piece. In *Dancing Celestial Deity* its organization and ornamental details evoked a scene of a twirling, dancing figure. Through symmetry, composition and sculpting techniques, *Unique Forms* and *Dancing Celestial Deity* realize the concept of motion in a static sculpture.

⁸ Leonard R. Rogers, “Methods and technique,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, August 08, 2016, accessed October 16, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/art/sculpture/Methods-and-techniques>.

⁹Rogers, “Methods and technique,” 2016.

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