

At a later date, we returned to watch the pouring. The workers wore long, heavy gloves, aprons, and leg protectors as they prepared to pour the molten bronze into the heated ceramic mold. Even the large open doors did not seem to alleviate the heat. Piled ingots of bronze glowed dully against the wall from the reflected light of the furnace. The crucible, translucent with heat, was slowly raised and the liquid metal was poured carefully into the waiting mold.

Osmundsen returned to the foundry later in the week to see the bronze sculpture emerge from the shattered ceramic mold. Now, the finishing processes began. The bronze was sandblasted, ground, hammered, and drilled. The work was slow and exacting. Using a carbide drill, Osmundsen worked most of the afternoon refining the thickness and character of the 'terns' beaks. He supervised the artisans in their work to avoid second-guessing, and for the third time that day we heard him explain the flow of the sculpture to the craftsmen who would do most of the finishing. "I feel it is not paramount in sculpture to reproduce detail," he remarked. "I look for movement, flow...

At last, Osmundsen was satisfied with the sculpture. A patina was applied with torch and chemicals, and the bronze took on a soft green shading. The coloring was subtle and it took several hours before everyone was pleased with the effect. The "Flight of the Terns" was ready for its journey home, where it would be on display during Osmundsen's one man show at Burrows Gallery in Englewood, NJ

The show's opening had the usual crush of people, champagne, and the pop of flashbulbs. The admiring spectators touched and talked about the sculpture. "It's beautiful!" "I love the way he did the birds, so graceful." "It looks real, the spacing is perfect." We heard the words strength,

movement, and form peppering countless conversations. Very few could guess at the months of work that preceded the sculpture in bronze standing before them.

Or the individual skill of scores of workers that had been vital to its creation, as had the far-sightedness and direction of its creator. Three months had passed since the "Flight of the Terns" was sketched on paper. Once an intangible idea, it now had three-dimensional form, balance and grace ... motion captured in bronze.

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The Flight of the Terns
by Wm Barth Osmundsen