

Crucifix and Stations of the Cross

Renowned Colorado artist Hubero Maestas made clear in July that he wouldn't have all of the Stations of the Cross ready for the Cathedral dedication Mass.

After all, not only is he sculpting each station, but he's also sculpting the larger that life crucifix that will adorn the workshop area of the new cathedral.



If that weren't challenge enough, Maestas will be sculpting the stations in bah relief, a difficult mode in which the figures emerge three-dimensionally from a two-dimensional plane.

“It's a great opportunity,” Maestas said. “It's also a challenge because one of the things I wanted to do originally in San Luis were the stations in bah relief. It's like a drawing in three dimensions and it's very difficult.”

Maestas sculpted a nearly life-sized 15 piece Stations of the Cross along a hillside in his hometown of San Luis, Colorado. Although he considered doing those Stations in bah relief, the stations wound up being sculpted in full three-dimension. He said the cathedral sculptures would allow him the “opportunity to meet the challenge that I was originally met with. It will be great opportunity for me as a sculptor.” The Stations of the Cross Shrine in San Luis lead along a trail to All Saints Chapel at the top of San Pedro Mesa. Due to the nature of his co9mmission here, Maestas toured the cathedral to get a feel for how to approach the design of the bronze sculptures.

With pen and paper in hand, Maestas walked slowly through the site taking notes, jotting down drawings and peering around at what equates to one massive canvas.

The crucifix and several of the stations will be complete and in place in time for the dedication ceremony.

Maestas has been sculpting since a young boy growing up in San Luis—the oldest town in Colorado, lo0cated off Hwy 285 near the New Mexico border. His early work focused on human and animal forms. He first sculpts the forms into clay or wax, then creates a mold, and finally pours the bronze that becomes the final sculpture . While many artists send their final clay sculpture to other artisans to create the

mold and pour the bronze, it's important to Maestas to see his art through from start to completion.

When one views the intense emotion and drama within the pieces, it's difficult to believe that his first sculptures of the Stations of the Cross that line the hill in San Luis were Maestas' first professional foray into religious art. Of course, he's had more than a little experience non-commercially.

"I've done religious art since I was a kid," he explained. "I did a replica in wood of the Last Supper when I was 12. I did find a desire to see more and learn more about what sculpture was at the time. There's just something about it that just struck me. It still does."

It's even more difficult to believe that most of his work—the lines of the face; the subtle curves of muscles—comes straight out of his imagination.

"Sometimes a model is necessary in order to get the right gesture or expression," he said. "I've done a lot of stuff and sometimes imagination will take you a long way."

Since the completion of the stations in San Luis, he sculpted a smaller version of the stations, also in bronze, that were presented to Pope John Paul II, and which stand as a permanent fixture at the Vatican Museum. Part of Maestas' reason for coming to Dodge City was to gain inspiration simply by viewing the space in which his sculptures will stand.

"Part of our stop in Dodge City was to see the space in my mind's eye, and what could look really good there. [Sometimes] inspiration is a thought or idea of what could be."

Maestas is married to Dana and has four children. He is currently working on the largest piece he's ever sculpted, a 28-foot high "resurrection" to be placed at a church in Texas. The Stations of the Cross at San Luis are free and open to the public. At the top of the hill is All Saints Chapel, which Maestas helped design.



