

Why Is It Important to Repair a Sculpture?

Core Competency: Social Responsibility and Ethics

Imagine that your university owns an artwork by Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti (ahl-BAIR-toh jah-koh-MEH-tee). Giacometti is known for sculptures of emaciated figures that stride forward despite their condition, as if they capture the human will to survive. Figure 1.50 shows an example of his work.

Giacometti created many of these sculptures after World War II, when he fled Paris after the Nazis invaded France. Many art historians see his work as a testament to those who lived through the difficult time. However, many also see Giacometti's work as timeless, as it speaks to people in general who have suffered and carried on. An exhibition of his art in New York, for example, following the September 11 attacks in 2001, emotionally connected with many New Yorkers who had lived through the terrorist strike.

The sculpture at your university has been much beloved. Because yours is a public university, the state purchased the sculpture. Faculty from numerous disciplines have discussed the sculpture in classes. Moreover, students have had a tradition of rubbing the figure's toes before exams for luck.

Last week, a workman accidentally damaged the sculpture. The university has to determine whether it should budget to fix the work. You have decided to write a letter to the editor of your student newspaper describing how it is the university's and community's responsibility to repair the sculpture.

Considering the material in Chapter 1, write the letter. Be sure to cover:

- What you think the purpose(s) of the sculpture is/are
- Why it would be important to repair the sculpture



FIGURE 1.50. Alberto Giacometti. *Walking Man I*. 1960. Bronze, 5' 11" × 10 ¾" × 3' 2 ¼". The Foundation Alberto and Annette Giacometti.