

## Step 5: Critical Assessment & Response

This final stage involves a judgment of the success of a work of art. Critical assessment involves questions of value and can include personal and subjective responses to art.

**Do you think this sculpture is successful and well done?**

**Do you like it? Does it move you?  
Does it relate to your life?**

We hope this approach enhanced your exploration and enjoyment of this sculpture. If you like, you can try this method with other works of art. Simply ask yourself the following questions with each object:

**What do I see?**  
(Close Observation)

**What do I think?**  
(Analysis)

**How can I learn more?**  
(Research)

**What might it mean?**  
(Interpretation)

**How do I feel about it?**  
(Critical Assessment and Response)

Nina Winkel, 1905-1990  
*Shelter* (1946)  
Terra-cotta, 20.5 x 17 x 16”  
X1983.7.34  
Gift of George and Nina Winkel

The intensity of fear is palpable in this statue. The mother's wide eyes and strained face capture her panic. Terrified, she clutches her child, protecting her offspring from the impending danger. The child, completely enveloped by its mother's extremities looks up in hope of reassurance. This expression of fear and the manifestation of motherly protection unite to provide the viewer a glimpse into the emotions experienced during World War II.

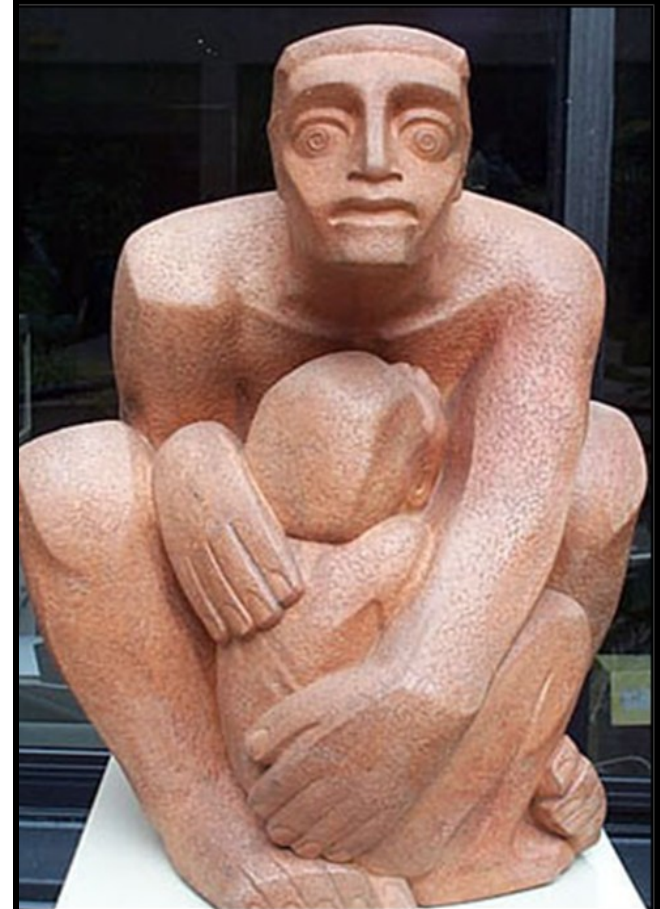
*“This work called **Shelter** has been done in 1946. So at that time the war was over and it definitely belongs into the series of works influenced by the war. This is also one of my favorite pieces and I think, one of the strongest of the war series. It shows us the undercover seen by our own eyes, a mother with a child, either in a shelter or her serving as a shelter for the child, and I have expressed an almost animal-like intensity of fear, especially in the case of the mother and therefore I have given her features that would belong almost more to the original, early mankind than the shape of faces as we know them now, but also the child is a little bit of a young apelike being, and the whole thing is just an intense expression of fear as well as motherly protection.”*

-Nina Winkel (October 9, 1988)

Winkel, Nina. Two Informal Lectures. 1988. VHS video recording transcribed by Sally Booth. February 8, 1988.

# Plattsburgh State Art Museum

## Look Think Learn



*Interactive Guide*  
part of a series

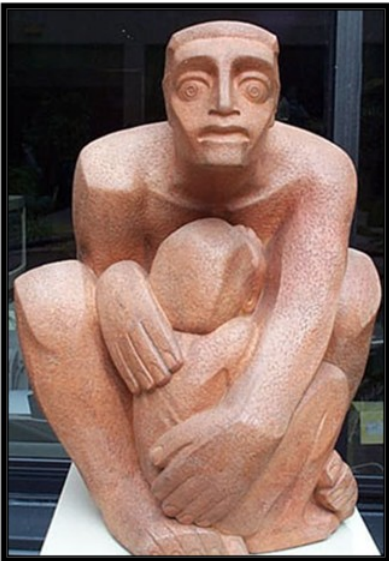
## Look Think Learn

As a college museum, Plattsburgh State Art Museum is committed to helping visitors develop visual literacy skills – the ability to construct meaning from all that we see. One way the museum does this is through a method called Learning to Look. This is a five-step approach to exploring works of art that is meant to empower visitors to observe carefully and think critically about any work of art they encounter. Simply follow the steps below.

### Step 1: Close Observation

Look carefully at the sculpture *Shelter*.

What do you see?



What do you notice about their faces?  
Their expressions?



What do you notice about the figures?  
Their bodies? Their poses?



What else do you notice about this piece?  
The skill of the artist? The material used?

### Step 2: Analysis

Without reading the text printed on the back of this brochure, think about all of this visual information.

Who do you think these people might be?

What do you think is happening in  
this scene?

What was he doing just before the moment  
captured in this sculpture?  
How do you know?

As you consider each of these questions, look to the sculpture for clues to support your ideas.

### Step 3: Research

Now that you have had a chance to look carefully and begin forming your own ideas about this work of art, feel free to read the text printed on the back of this brochure. It provides information you cannot get simply by looking at the object.

When you have finished reading the text, consider the following:

Does the informational text reinforce what you observed and deduced on your own? How?

Did the text mention anything you did not see or think about previously? If so, what?

How would your experience of this sculpture have been different if you read the text first?

### Step 4: Interpretation

Interpretation involves bringing together your close observation, analysis, and any additional information you have gathered about an art object to try to understand what a work of art means.

There can be multiple interpretations of a work of art. The best informed ones are based on visual evidence and accurate research.

Some interpretive questions to consider for this sculpture might be:

What do you think Nina Winkel was trying to say about World War II?

How do you think the title “Shelter” is captured in the sculpture?