

# POLYCLITUS AND THE PROFESSOR

Fortunately the great, Greek sculptor Polyclitus never had an art professor hovering around him as he created the *Doryphorus*. If he did, however, his most famous statue may have never become fully realized.

"Polyclitus, how's it coming?" asked the ancient Greek art professor, head of the sculpture department at the Argos College of Art and Design (ACAD).

"Who are you?" asked Polyclitus, losing his focus on his work.

"Who am I?" laughed the professor. "I'm your art professor! You can call me Robbie. I have a masters degree, which means I'm better than you and know a bunch more. I want to thank you for taking my Introduction to Sculpture class, and I look forward to teaching you how to sculpt compositionally..."

Polyclitus interrupted the professor, "Introduction to Sculpture? You want to *introduce* me to sculpture?"

"Well, yes, of course. If you've never had any formal training, I'm sure you've developed some nasty habits in your poor attempts at teaching yourself."

"Do you know who I am? I am Polyclitus! It was I who carved the colossal statue in the Temple of Hera! What have *you* done?"

The professor laughed once again and repeated, "I have a masters degree."

"I know not of this so-called 'degree' you keep referring to, but that does not

make you qualified to teach *me*. I wrote the definitive treatise on the subject of the human form, the *Cannon*. Perhaps you have heard of this work? If anyone would be doing the teaching here, it would be me."

"That's interesting. Naive, but interesting. What are you starting to work on now?"

"Starting? I'm nearly finished."

The professor laughed. "It's a good start, but your use of line needs to be worked on. Remember, this is a three-dimensional figure, you need to shape the space, not define it with lines."

"My colleagues praise me for my use of line!"

"And I suppose *they* have a masters degree?"

Polyclitus paused, he was beginning to doubt himself. "No, they don't, but..."

"And look at this negative shape here!" said the professor. "This is way oversimplified."

"Ummm... Actually, I... I was just going to work on that area."

"Why is his hand open like this? Were you planning on giving him something to hold?"

"Yes, a wooden spear, for he is the Spear Bearer."

"Wood? No, no, no. That would make the two pieces seem separate. You have a human figure in bronze and you want to have him holding a *wooden* spear? No, this is the bronze assignment. You're

going to have to start over. And this time stick with tradition. I want a rigid human form. You can think about experimental elements like 'realism' when you graduate, but at the moment you don't have the experience to attempt to completely redefine the art field."

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