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Legacies

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MATERIALISM

Bronze

by Andrea Taylor

AN ANCIENT METAL ALLOY HOLDS STRONG

Known for its durability and ageless beauty, bronze is a metal alloy made by melting copper with tin. Because the metal is so easily worked, molded and tooled with a fine, smooth result, bronze has long been a popular material in the art world. Bronze figure casting began in China between 96 and 1279 A.D. Chinese bronzes often depicted ceremonial imagery, while Indian and Egyptian castings represented deities, Africans cast images of nature and Greeks recreated the human form. Today the most popular bronze pieces are sundials, statues and fountains. "The performance is what customers are looking for. Bronze will stay looking as beautiful as the day it was purchased," said Maria Dumoulin, vice president of marketing and manufacturing at Wilton's Kenneth Lynch & Sons. *See Resources.*

- "Bronze" is a French word that comes from the Italian word "bronzio."
- In 1432, Florentine artist Donatello cast his *David* in bronze, making it the first freestanding nude created since classical times.
- It was not until the late 1800's that bronze castings were done in America. Today you'll find some of the world's finest foundries in the United States.
- Bronze is the most popular material for cast metal sculptures. Common bronze alloys generally expand slightly just before they set, filling out even the finest details of a mold.
- During the Bronze Age, arsenic was commonly added to motlen bronze, which served to make the alloy even more durable when it hardened.

