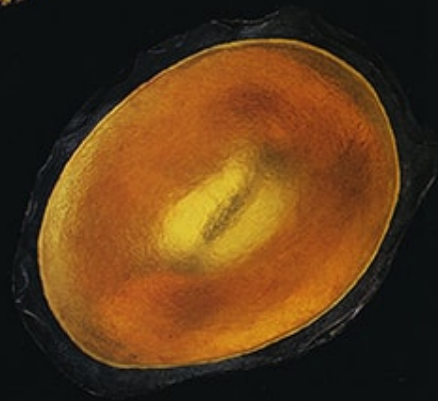


A Brush
with

Gold



Daniel Brush used 22-karat gold, mastodon ivory and Burmese sapphires to create *Silla's Rattle*, 1982 (above, dismantled), for his son. *Black Box VII*, 1991-96 (right, interior view) is made of pure gold and steel. *Justinian*, 1989-93 (far right), is made of pure gold and 22-karat gold.



Sculptures by a modern master using age-old techniques will be on public view for the first time

AT FIRST GLANCE THE OBJECTS APPEAR CRAFTED BY ancient artisans; the detail is exquisite. But these "intimate sculptures" of gold, space-age steel, precious gems and 40-million-year-old mastodon ivory, ranging in size from one to seven inches, are the designs of 51-year-old Daniel Brush. For the past 20 years he has worked in virtual seclusion in a New York City loft-studio he shares with his wife, Olivia, and son, Silla. There he creates miniature masterpieces, each taking up to 1,000 hours to complete.

Before Brush retreated to New York, he was a painter and an art professor at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. But he had long admired the goldwork of the Etruscans and was fascinated by their techniques. Brush became obsessed with the mysteries of gold and with perfecting his own skills. He revived other techniques—ornamental turnery using 19th-century lathes and steel carving done with chisels. Brush learned about his materials by visiting Pittsburgh steel mills, and about mathematical accuracy by working as a master toolmaker. His sculptures are imbued with his passion for Oriental philosophy, and he attributes his concentration and patience to its discipline.

The first exhibition of Brush's sculptures will open September 11 at the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art. Additional objects will be revealed in *Daniel Brush: Gold Without Boundaries*, a book with photographs by John Bigelow Taylor, to be published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., next month.

—Marlene A. Liddell



DRAGONFLY BOWL, 1991-93
Pure gold, steel, rare earth magnets



ORB, 1992-95
Pure gold, steel

LEANING BOULDER, 1987-92 (underside)
Pure gold, steel



DANIEL BRUSH IS DRAWN TO THE MIND AND spirit of ancient gold masters. He reworks each object hundreds of times. To fabricate the dome for *Justinian* (page 95), he hammered the gold to a thickness of .002 inch and covered it with handmade gold granules (each .006-.008 inch in diameter). He used a two-haired sable brush to place each of the 50,000 granules to finish the piece. When Brush chisels steel, he wears goggles, welder's boots and leather-chaps, gauntlets, apron—to protect his body. "Nonetheless, every day that I carve, my hands and chest are covered with steel splinters and blood," says Brush. "The splinters are so fine that they can only be found when the rust appears under the skin."



OLD GROWTH, 1991-93 (top view)
Pure gold, steel

SCHOLAR'S TABLE PIECE, 1994
Pure gold, steel



DOVE FIBULA, 1973 (detail)
22-karat gold

