A Salute to Christian Petersen

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A Salute to Christian Petersen

Virginia Carter highlights the life and work of Christian Petersen, Iowa State's sculptor

IOWA STATE'S sculptor in residence, Christian Petersen, will be honored this month in recognition of his contribution to art on the campus. From Nov. 25 to Dec. 12, Mr. Petersen's works will be on public display in the South Ballroom of the Memorial Union.

In 1934 Christian Petersen arrived at Iowa State to decorate the then new Dairy Building Court. His work was so enthusiastically received that he was asked to remain at Iowa State as a member of the faculty. Since he first came, Mr. Petersen has added to the beauties of the campus. His sculptures of the Indian women on the Memorial Union fountain and of the children on the pool in front of Home Economics Building, the muscular athletes in bas-relief on the Men's Gymnasium, the veterinarian in the Veterinary Court, are some of the works which the artist has added to our campus.

Nearly all of Christian Petersen's work is a direct result of his personal experiences. In 1936 Mr. Petersen saw the tragedies of a flood in Mississippi. He gained a conception of what a flood is to those people, which he interpreted in the face of the weary mother, striving to get away from the force which seems to drag her back, trying to take her child from her. All this Christian Petersen expresses in the striking figure.

A "bar of music" is the symbol of his work of six children's heads, according to Mr. Petersen. Each head expresses a rhythm, light and dark, high and low, like the chords of a song.

Christian Petersen is an artist of the people. He believes that confusion has no place in art, but that art is a subject of understanding and enlightenment.

(Your next issue will feature more of Petersen's work)