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sculpture, *n.*

Pronunciation: /ˈskʌptʃʊə(r)/

Forms: Also 15 **sculture**.

Etymology: < Latin *sculptūra*, < *sculpĕre* to carve, engrave, sculpture. Compare French ...

1.

a. Originally, the process or art of carving or engraving a hard material so as to produce designs or figures in relief, in intaglio, or in the round. In modern use, that branch of fine art which is concerned with the production of figures in the round or in relief, either by carving, by fashioning some plastic substance, or by making a mould for casting in metal; the practice of this art.

Now chiefly used with reference to work in stone (esp. marble) or bronze (similar work in wood, ivory, etc. being spoken of as *carving*), and to the production of figures of considerable size. Thus to apply the term, e.g. to die-sinking or to stone-carving on a small scale would now be regarded as a transferred use.

- 1390 J. GOWER *Confessio* II. 83 Zenzis fond first the pourtreture, And Promotheüs the Sculpture.
- 1563 J. SHUTE *First Groundes Archit.* sig. Aii, And hauing the sayde trikes and deuises aswell of sculture & painting as also of Architecture.
- 1570 J. DEE in H. Billingsley tr. Euclid *Elements Geom.* Pref. sig. dij^v, Though I mencion not Sculpture, in my Table of Artes Mathematicall.
- 1763 J. BROWN *Diss. Poetry & Music* xxxv. 76 The Excellence of Sculpture is the Effect of repeated Experience, which refers itself to the Works of Nature, as to its Archetype.
- 1817 SHELLEY *Laon & Cythna* I. l. 26 Nor in painting's light, or mightier verse, Or sculpture's marble language.
- 1873 J. A. SYMONDS *Stud. Greek Poets* x. 320 Sculpture is the language of the body, music the language of the soul.

b. †The operation of cutting or engraving (*obs.*); the operation of sculpturing.

- 1661 R. LOVELL *Πανζωορυσκτολογία* Isagoge sig. E8^v, All may have Sculpture by the powder of smiris, except the adamant.
- 1860 J. RUSKIN *Mod. Painters* V. 262 The dog. watches the progress of the sculpture with a grave interest.

c. Kind or quality of sculptured work.

1653 A. MARVELL *Corr. in Wks.* (1875) II. 4 And I shall hope to set nothing upon his spirit but what may be of a good sculpture.

2. concr.

a. The product of the sculptor's art; that which is sculptured (†or engraved); sculptured figures in general.

1390 J. GOWER *Confessio* III. 167 And of what Ston his sepulture Thei sholden make, and what sculpture He wolde ordeine therupon.

a1631 R. COTTON *Abstr. Rec. Tower* (1642) 23 For money is not meerey to bee esteemed in respect of the sculpture or figure.

1751 T. GRAY *Elegy* xx. 9 Some frail memorial still erected nigh, With uncouth rhimes and shapeless sculpture deck'd.

1815 J. SMITH *Panorama Sci. & Art* II. 763 When sculpture is represented, as it is always supposed to be white marble or stone, the engraving should be light and smooth.

fig.

1645 MILTON *Tetrachordon* 28 These ages wherin Canons, and Scotisms, and Lumbard Laws, have dull'd, and almost obliterated the lively Sculpture of ancient reason.

b. In particularized sense: A work of sculpture; a sculptured (†or engraved) figure or design.

1616 J. BULLOKAR *Eng. Expositor*, *Sculpture*, a caruing, a grauing.

1667 MILTON *Paradise Lost* I. 716 Cornice or Freeze, with bossy Sculptures grav'n.

1756 tr. J. G. Keyssler *Trav.* I. 476 A pretty church..remarkable for its exquisite marble sculptures.

1847 TENNYSON *Princess* v. 54 Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot, And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal.

1870 J. LUBBOCK *Origin of Civilisation* ii. 40 In some places of Western Europe, rock sculptures have been discovered.

fig.

1658 W. GURNALL *Christian in Armour: 2nd Pt.* II. verse 14 III. i. 207 Righteousness..is a sculpture, the Spirit ingraves on none, but the children of God.

1678 R. CUDWORTH *True Intellect. Syst. Universe* I. v. 675 The Divine Art and Wisdom..would..every where Impress the Sculptures and Signatures of it self.

†**3.** A picture or illustration printed from an engraved plate or block; an engraving; engravings collectively. *Obs.*

1654 J. OGILBY tr. Virgil *Wks.* (title-page), Translated, adorn'd with Sculpture and illustrated with Annotations.

1670 J. OGILBY *Africa* (title-page), Adorn'd with peculiar Maps, and proper Sculptures.

1691 T. HALE *Acct. New Inventions* p. xiii, An admirable Draught or Sculpture of this Ship..in four

large sheets of Dutch Paper, will shortly be published.

- 1779 JOHNSON *Dryden in Pref. Wks. Eng. Poets* III. 21 Settle..had published his play, with sculptures and a preface of defiance.

4. *Natural Hist.* Marking of the skin, shell, or surface of any animal or plant resembling that produced by a carving tool.

- 1826 W. KIRBY & W. SPENCE *Introd. Entomol.* III. xxxiv. 397 The sculpture of the integument of insects is often very remarkable.
- 1833 C. LYELL *Princ. Geol.* III. 277 In a few the claws are visible, and the sculpture, and even some degree of local colouring are preserved.
- 1859 C. DARWIN *Origin of Species* v. 145 But in some compositous plants the seeds also differ in shape and sculpture.
- 1894 *Geol. Mag.* Oct. 434 In its sculpture *Ammonites Bainii*..somewhat resembles the present species.

COMPOUNDS

attrib. and *Comb.*, as ***sculpture-gallery***, ***sculpture-like*** *adj.*

- 1834 F. D. HEMANS *Water-lily in Scenes & Hymns of Life* 237 Thou sculpture-like and stately River-Queen!
- 1856 W. HUGHES *Treas. Geog.* 250/2 The glyptothek, or sculpture-gallery [of Munich].

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