

the leaders.
Then, the British took over. Those who are older will remember that in the geography books they studied in school,

regard to space. Our predicament is intensified by our unrealistic notions about nuclear weapons in general and about Russia in particular.

One can conclude only that these people find certain things to be unthinkable because they themselves absolutely refuse to think.

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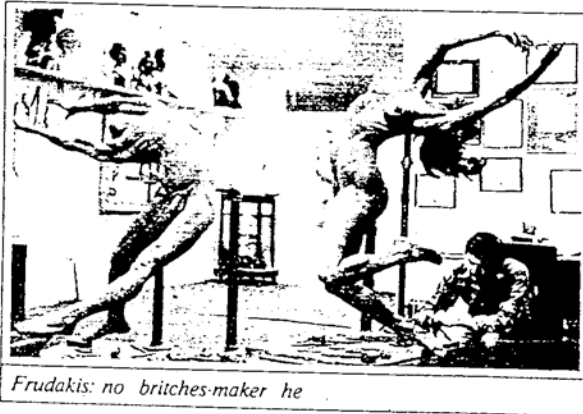
Making Florence in the heartland

BY WILL HIGGINS

In Indianapolis, an artist confronts a situation that has haunted artists throughout the ages. It's a problem that Michelangelo and Rodin, for example, faced in their lifetimes, in places such as Rome and Paris. Now, Zenos Frudakis confronts it in his—here in Indianapolis, of all places, a city that so far isn't an art capital.

The predicament: how to depict specific areas of the unclothed male.

Frudakis, a Philadelphia sculptor who grew up in Gary, Ind., has been commissioned to create three statues, each 7-1/2 feet tall and nude, for the plaza of a new downtown office building here. The statues—of



Frudakis: no britches-maker he

two men and a woman—will dance about wildly, arms upraised, in front of Capital Center, the two-towered structure at the corner of Ohio Street and Illinois Avenue. The work is scheduled to be installed

in mid-July.

"I'm not trying to shock people," insists Frudakis. "I do want some sense of sensuality, but not of pornography. The subject is not three naked
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people. What it's about is emotion and feeling. I want to uplift people. I want action, dreams of flying. I want life."

To produce sculpture that people can relate to on a personal level, Frudakis believes in nudity. "All of us under the clothes are basically alike," he explains. "By [the statues] not having costumes, people can relate to the statues as themselves, stripped of superficial veneer."

Frudakis wanted to sculpt male figures as well as the female figure for two reasons: Male figures are more challenging for sculptors, and men can relate to sculptures of men better than they can to sculptures of women, he says.

"It'll be mostly businessmen downtown who see it, and I want them to identify with the piece," he says.

Herein lies the age-old rub. Whereas people throughout history have largely been comfortable with female nudity in art, they've often balked at male nudity. Specifically, it's the male sexual organ that has

been the sensitive area.

Rodin covered John the Baptist's with a fig leaf. The clerics at the Sistine Chapel hired a painter to clean up after Michelangelo—to cover the male organs in "The Last Judgment" by adding a few well-placed draperies. Other artists of the day scoffed at this touch-up work, labeling the editing artist a "britches-maker."

Frudakis, 35, is no britches-maker. But after Capital Center developer Michael Browning saw a miniature of the proposed work and expressed concern about the male figures' anatomies, Frudakis did agree to make some adjustments, and not grudgingly. "I understand; I'm from Indiana," he explains.

After examining how artists in the past dealt with the problem—admittedly "a strange way to review art history"—Frudakis opted against the traditional fig leaf and draped cloth.

Instead, he "unfocused" the sensitive area. "The broad shape is there," he says. "I didn't airbrush it out. I deemphasized it."

He in effect blurred the area. "You can tell what it is from far away," Frudakis allows. "But when you get closer, the picture doesn't get any clearer."

He says the figures' sensuality hasn't been diluted by the effort. "I wasn't offended by the compromise," he says. "I wouldn't want people to be so conscious of the part that they miss the whole."

Frudakis praises Browning's decision to use his work: "It took courage. I think he'll be rewarded with people in Indianapolis liking these sculptures. I hope people don't object and discourage them."

If people do object, Frudakis has a ready response. It stems from a recent experience. Earlier this year, when Frudakis offered to create a similar work for an office complex in Cherry Hill, N.J., the developer, Rouse & Associates, at first was wary. "This is Cherry Hill, not Florence," a Rouse official told Frudakis.

"With that kind of thinking, this will never be Florence," Frudakis said.