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**SPECIAL EDITION:  
74th ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY**

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**GENERAL 'LY  
SPEAKING**

June 6, 2018

Dispatches From  
The Eisenhower Memorial Commission

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**Creation of the Eisenhower Memorial Sculptures**  
Part I: Working in Clay with Sculptor Sergey Eylanbekov



*Sculptor Sergey Eylanbekov working on full-size clay models of the soldiers  
Images and sculpture courtesy of Sergey Eylanbekov; Photo by F. Martinelli*

Architect Frank Gehry's design for the Eisenhower Memorial was developed in collaboration with a creative team of artists and engineers. Sculptor Sergey Eylanbekov was selected to design the sculptures that will commemorate Dwight D. Eisenhower as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in World War II and as 34th President of the United States. Eylanbekov's sculptures will be placed at the core of the Memorial in Washington, D.C. The statues will be executed in bronze and the bas reliefs will be carved in stone.

Eylanbekov, a world-renowned sculptor, grew up in the Soviet Union. He attended Moscow School of Fine Arts and was then accepted into the prestigious Surikov Academy of Fine Arts, from which he graduated with honors. During the tumultuous period of change that occurred in the 1980s during the Gorbachev era, Eylanbekov decided to start life over in the United States. Speaking no English and desperately short of money, he came to New York and then proceeded to work his way up to the top of his profession, becoming an American citizen along the way. In the past twenty-seven years, his ascent has continued as his artwork has garnered praise all over the world. This coming fall, Sergey's monumental sculptures of president John Adams and governor John Hancock will be inaugurated in the historic city of Quincy, MA.





*Close-ups of full-scale clay models of the soldiers and the General  
Images and sculpture courtesy of Sergey Eylanbekov*

## Concept Model

The first step in the process was for Sergey to design a concept model. His inspiration for the composition honoring General Eisenhower came from the the famous photograph of Eisenhower with the 101st Airborne Division before their jump into France. Behind the sculptures is a bas relief depicting the Normandy landings on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

The concept design model was created to function compositionally within the larger architectural elements of the memorial designed by Frank Gehry. The purpose of the concept model is to create an appropriate sculptural composition without concentrating on the characters or any details.



*Rendering of the concept model honoring Eisenhower's accomplishments as General Memorial design by Gehry Partners, LLP; sculpture by Sergey Eylanbekov  
Image courtesy of the [Eisenhower Memorial Commission](#)*



*General Eisenhower visits paratroopers of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division before their jump into France, June 5, 1944*

*Image courtesy of the [Library of Congress](#)*

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## 3' Study Model

From the concept model, Sergey moves on to a 3' study model, which is approximately one-third the size of the final sculpture. Initially, clay is applied to a metal structure, supported by a steel armature, to give rough shape and mass to the figures. Referencing historic photographs and research allows Sergey to fine tune the details of the composition as they relate to the time and event. Studying positions of the figures, movement, overall proportions, and masses, as well as getting the “feel” of the characters in the composition, is essential at the 3' study model for future enlargement to full scale.





*Various stages of work on the 3' study model  
Images and sculpture courtesy of Sergey Eylanbekov*

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## 9' (Full Scale) Clay Model

Once the 3' study model is complete, small reference points are added to correlate the sculptural volumes and proportion to the next larger model. By means of a pantograph, the key reference points are then transferred from the smaller model to the larger.

General composition and its rhythm convey the overall mood and expression depicted in sculpture. Details such as hands, facial expressions, and intensity and angularity of fabric folds put the final, and very important, touches on the sculptures. Good, expressive details can produce deep emotions—a particular and notorious challenge for sculptors when it comes to the faces and hands. The means of expression are limited and tension and energy can only be translated through the intensity of the form - this requires masterful modeling in clay.



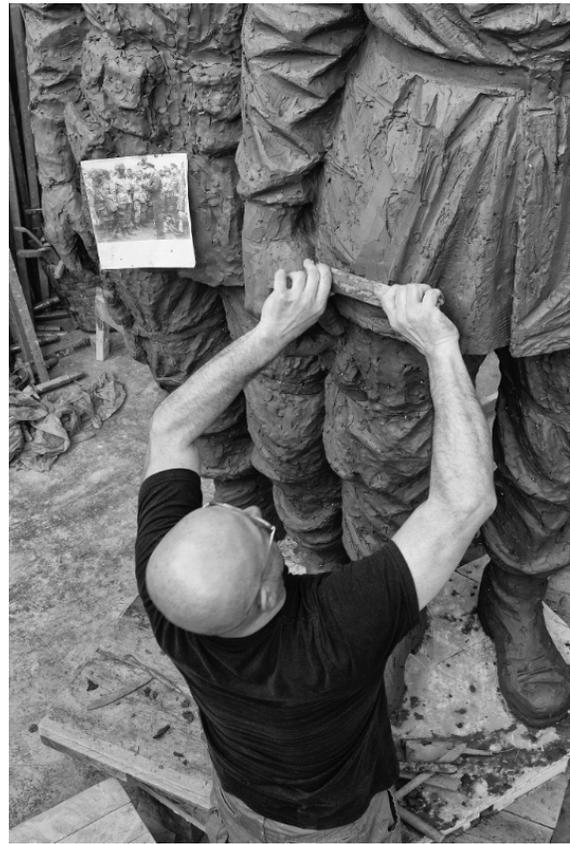


*Initial stages of work on the 9' clay models: steel armature is built (top), clay is applied to the armature (left), key reference points are transferred via pantograph (right)  
Images and sculpture courtesy of Sergey Eylanbekov*









*Sculptor working on the 9' clay models  
Images and sculpture courtesy of Sergey Eylanbekov*



*Close-up details of the 9' clay models illustrate the complexities of expressing power and emotion through hands and faces - one of the biggest challenges of sculpture  
Image and sculpture courtesy of Sergey Eylanbekov*



*Full size figures of two of the D-Day soldiers finished in clay  
Image and sculpture courtesy of Sergey Eylanbekov*



*Finished 9' clay models of the General and soldiers will be used to create the bronzes*

Images and sculpture courtesy of Sergey Eylanbekov

## Next Issue: Making the Bronze

The next issue of *General'ly Speaking* will feature Part II of creating the Eisenhower Memorial sculptures - making the bronze.

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