

Frozen moments

Mark Maholm crafts F1 race cars in detail

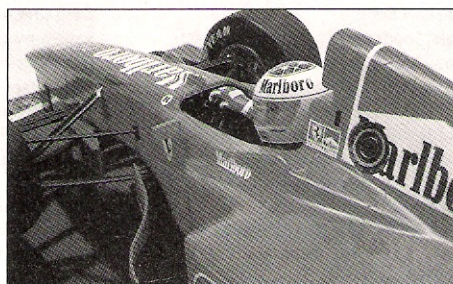
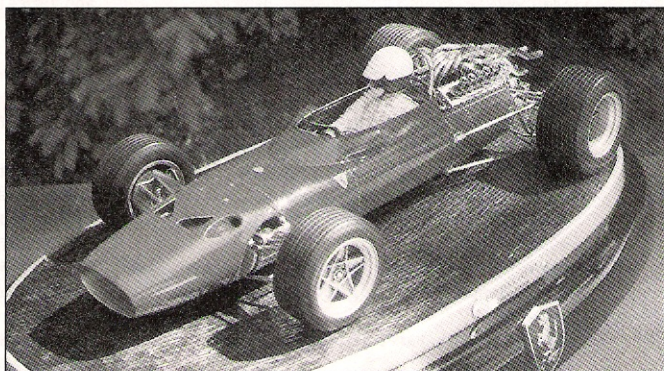
We first saw Mark Maholm's 1/6th-scale representation of Michael Schumacher's 1997 Ferrari F310B at an art show during last year's Meadow Brook Concours weekend. It's exactly realistic, 27 inches long, made of 30 pounds of resin, wood, rubber, bronze and glass. Each BBS wheel is stunning, the cockpit includes the proper shifting paddles, and then there are those steely Schumacher eyes peering out of the helmet at you.

It can be nearly indistinguishable from the full-size race car in photos. That's a flaw in some art critics' eyes, since it leaves no interpretative space for the artist. When we saw Maholm's F310B, somewhere in there—maybe in those eyes under the helmet—we could sense the artist's enthusiasm for F1.

Little surprise, then, to find that the Ohio native says a single event changed his life: While stationed in Germany with the U.S. military, he attended the 1967 German GP at the (old) Nurburgring. He caught the bug when racing was at a purist's high watermark, just before wings and sponsorships really came to the fore, and legitimate safety concerns eliminated courses like the old Nurburgring.

Maholm took to racing himself. After earning his degree in fine arts at Kent State, he taught art and did 15 years as a Formula Vee and Formula Ford driver before giving it up for more parenting time with wife Faye.

Maholm channeled his automotive passions into restoration and illustration before hatching an idea: a 1/10th-scale bronze of the 1967 Eagle-Weslake F1 car, the one Dan Gurney drove at the German GP. It took countless hours of work, using bronze castings made by the lost wax method, followed by miniature welding, drilling, soldering, tapping, carving, filing and polishing. The resulting sculpture, with its exposed



INTRICATELY DETAILED BRONZE

1967 FERRARI

with Bandini aboard (above), paired with photorealistic '97 Ferrari 310B (left) and driver Michael Schumacher.

V12 engine modeled to perfection, has been likened to a three-dimensional photograph.

Maholm followed that stunner with the 1967 Ferrari 312 seen here, with a bronze Lorenzo Bandini driving it; clearly not "real" because its entire drivetrain and suspension are in polished bronze. It is also exact in every detail.

With "only" 200 components and a urethane resin fuselage, the bigger Schumacher car represents a step away from the complexity of these bronze sculptures, which take so long to create that Maholm can't afford to do them on spec.

"I would still do a bronze to order," he says, "but I'm done building them for myself. It can be grueling; I got that out of my system."

While the price on a new bronze would reflect the immense amount of time required, the larger 1/6th-scale resin cars like the '97 Ferrari are priced in the mid-to-high four-figure range. That's not cheap, but not out of line with other works out there, and Maholm can only do a few each year. Watch for them on the show circuit.

—Kevin A. Wilson

The sculptures have been likened to three-dimensional photographs.