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Reuben Kadish, 70, a Sculptor Of Works Evoking the Ancient

BY ROBERTA SMITH

Reuben Kadish, an American sculptor whose rough-hewn figures and monumental brads often evoked the art of ancient civilizations, died on Sunday at New York Hospital in Manhattan. He was 79 years old and had homes in Manhattan and Vernon, N.J.

He died of complications from chronic leukemia, said his son Julian.

Mr. Kadish, who was born in Chicago on Jan. 29, 1913, and reared in Los Angeles, started his career as a painter, studying with the West Coast painter Lonner Felt, while still a teenager. While attending the Otis Institute in Los Angeles, he formed close friendships with Jackson Pollock and Philip Guston, who would become Abstract Expressionists. Mr. Kadish's sculpture, made in either terra cotta or bronze, always had a strong Expressionist slant, but his interests in the figure and in social content kept his art representation.

Collaborated with Ben Murot

In 1933, Mr. Kadish apprenticed briefly as a painter to David Mfaró, the Mexican muralist, and collaborated with Mr. Guston on murals in California and Mexico. While in Mexico, the Assoc

He was impressed by the art of ancient Mexico, as did the sculpture of India, which he encountered while working in Asia in the Army Artist Unit in the last two years of World War II.

After the war, he moved to New York City. In 1948, to support his family, he bought a dairy farm in Vernon, which he operated for 10 years. During this period, he stopped painting and eventually took up sculpture. In 1961, he had his first one-man show in New York City and began teaching art at Cooper Union, which he continued up to a few months ago. He was represented since 1965 by the Grace Borgenicht Gallery in Manhattan.

His work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. A survey of his sculpture and drawing was held this past summer at the State University at Stony Brook, L.I.

In addition to his son Julian, of Norton, Mass., he is survived by his wife, the former Barbara Weeks; two other sons, Daniel, of Jersey City, and Keenan, of Manhattan; two brothers, Morris, of San Francisco, and Frank, at Phoenix, and three grandchildren.