Sculpture of the twentieth century

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SCULPTURE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
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SCULPTURE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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ANDREW CARNDUFF RITCHIE
Director of the Exhibition
INTRODUCTION

One important feature of twentieth-century sculpture is the rôle the painter has played in it. Since the renaissance the painter has held a dominant position in the visual arts, for reasons too complex to examine here. This dominance was so great, in fact, between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, that sculpture, with few exceptions, was relegated to a very subsidiary position indeed and was all too often reduced to the making of dull portrait busts and insipid garden statuary. The revival of sculpture in the twentieth century has been largely the result of a healthy interaction between it and painting. Sculptors have looked at painting and have been deeply influenced by every modern painting movement. Painters have looked at sculpture, and many have produced important sculpture themselves.

While these two arts have drawn closer together, modern architecture, Corbusier and the Bauhaus notwithstanding, has for the most part taken a reticent, even standoffish, position towards them. Whether for aesthetic or economic reasons this unfortunate isolation of one major art from the others is to be deplored. It is to be hoped that before long a union can again be established.

Many modern painters in search of inspiration outside the traditional fields made sterile by the overgrazing of academic artists have turned to non-Western cultures, for example Africa, the Near and Far East, pre-Conquest South America and Oceania, and from these sources, largely represented by sculpture, have received suggestions for new formal experiments and for the extension and enrichment of their imagery. Following their example the modern sculptor has enormously increased the resources of his art as the diversity and complexity of twentieth-century sculpture proves at a glance.

Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries the Western sculptor was dependent upon the renaissance-derived, Greco-Roman tradition. Rodin, the father of modern sculpture, remained largely within that tradition but, by the force of his personality, and under the stimulation of revolutionary movements in painting, he gave this tradition a new life after it had practically died at the hands of academic formularizers. Rodin’s rhetoric may be difficult for us to accept today, skeptical and inhibited as we are in the face of cataclysmic events. And even during the first decade of the century there was a reaction on the part of such sculptors as Maillol and Brancusi to the dynamic explosiveness of Rodin’s forms and subjects. As Cézanne had endeavored to control and give substance to the evanescent light
effects of the impressionists, so Maillol tamed the fiery gestures of Rodin and in the
closed, compact rhythms of his compositions, based almost wholly on the female
nude, presented a contained and idealized version of the human figure which has
influenced a great many modern sculptors. He was in love with Greece as Cézanne
was with Poussin and in their different ways they can be called neo-classic in tem-
perament as opposed to the expressionist abandon of Rodin.

Rodin has had his followers and those who have associated themselves directly or
indirectly with him, for example Matisse and Picasso in their beginnings, and after
a long cubist phase, Lipchitz. Brancusi also, the third of the great triumvirate of
modern sculptors, came under Rodin’s influence in his youth. However, he early
took a contrary direction in a search for a control and purification of form which
owes nothing to Rodin nor to the tradition from which he stems. Born in Rumania,
one of the crossroads between Asia and Europe, Brancusi retains much of the
Asiatic’s love for the occult and the mysterious. The abstract treatment of form in
certain prehistoric art, the geometrical refinement of some Oriental sculpture, the
elementary grasp of formal relations in African sculpture appealed to him and from
their example he set out to by-pass the traditional sculpture of the West. To release
the image imprisoned in the stone or wood by a reduction of the material to its
absolute essence was his intention. The removal of particularizing detail is an objec-
tive comparable to the neo-classic idealization of form. Both points of view look to
a type rather than to an individual. Maillol’s woman is a formal idea, not a portrait
of a particular nude. The idea in his case is bound to a great Western tradition.
Brancusi’s Bird in Space, on the other hand, reaches out to a universal, transcen-
dental idea of flight, an idea, whatever its non-Western origins, that had never been
as completely expressed before.

If the first decade of the century is dominated by three great personalities: Rodin,
Maillol and Brancusi, the second decade is marked by three movements: cubism,
futurism and constructivism. Each follows a more or less abstract direction. Between
1908 and 1914 the cubist revolution took place, a revolution comparable to the
discovery of perspective in the renaissance. Cubism was actually a new multi-focus
perspective for the examination or analysis simultaneously of different views of an
object or figure either at rest, as with the cubists proper, such as Picasso, Braque,
Lipchitz and Laurens, or in motion, as with the futurist Boccioni or the futurist-
derived Duchamp-Villon. Brancusi’s abstract purification of the object, the cubists’
and futurists’ geometrical dissection of it in a static or kinetic state all had to do with
the animal or human figure or the still life in relation to space. The most extreme of
all the abstractionists were the so-called constructivists. Deriving some of their ideas
from the cubists, first in Russia, later in Germany, Holland, France and England,
they pushed abstraction to its extreme geometrical limit by divorcing their shapes or
forms from any organic or human reference. Theirs was an effort above all to make
space rather than mass the primary consideration in sculpture.

The surrealists, beginning in the twenties, reacted violently to what they consid-
ered was the sterile intellectualism of abstract art of whatever degree. As a corrective
they explored the world of subconscious experience and from this source created an imagery of fantastic, horrific dimensions. Arp, Gonzalez and Giacometti are, or were, the leading exponents of surrealist sculpture and their influence, particularly Arp’s and Gonzalez’, has been widespread.

While surrealism ceased being an organized movement before the beginning of World War II, its influence, together with that of the constructivists, has continued until today. By a sort of fusion of the two, in fact, there has been produced a new avant-garde movement now vaguely called abstract expressionism, whose principal practitioners are American. At the same time, during the last decade and a half there has been a return by some of the older sculptors to more naturalistic forms. Picasso, Lipchitz and Laurens and some of the younger Italians such as Marini and Manzù are examples of this tendency.

In short, modern sculpture, like all other aspects of the twentieth century, has been in a constant state of flux and at the present moment shows no signs of arriving at any final resolution. Herein perhaps is the secret of its extraordinary diversity and nervous vitality.

The present exhibition is designed to give the observer as comprehensive a view as possible of twentieth-century sculpture in all its richness and variety of expression. What has been attempted is to present a balanced picture of the giants of modern sculpture, including outstanding painter-sculptors, the various movements they represent, their followers or those who are stylistically related to them and, finally, a limited selection of work being done today. The latter section is suggestive rather than representative since, for reasons of space, many younger artists from abroad have had to be omitted.

ANDREW CARNDUFF RITCHIE
Rodin, Auguste. French.

St. John the Baptist. 1878-80.
Bronze, 6'0½" high. Lent by the City Art Museum of St. Louis.
Renoir, Auguste. French.
Washerwoman. 1917. Bronze, 48" high. Lent by the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Degas, Edgar. French.
Woman Seated in Armchair. 1896-1911. Bronze, 12 1/2" high. The Art Institute of Chicago

LACHAISE, GASTON. AMERICAN. *Floating Figure*. 1927. Bronze (cast 1935), 53" high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, given anonymously in memory of the artist
Zorach, William. American. Floating Figure. 1922. African mahogany, 9" high x 33¼" long. Lent by the Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, Room of Contemporary Art

Opposite:
Lehmbruck, Wilhelm. German.
Seated Youth. 1918? Bronze,
41½” high. Lent by the
Kunstmuseum, Duisburg,
Germany

Barlach, Ernst. German.
Man Drawing Sword. 1911.
Wood, 31" high. Lent by the
Museum of Cranbrook Academy
of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Arp, Jean (Hans). French.
Philadelphia Museum of Art

MOORE, Henry, British. **Reclining Figure.** 1935. Elm wood, 19" high, 35" long. Lent by the Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, Room of Contemporary Art


Opposite:
CALDER, ALEXANDER. AMERICAN. Streetcar. 1951. Sheet metal, brass, wire, 9’8” long. Lent by the Art Institute of Chicago

Opposite:

GONZALEZ, JULIO. SPANISH. Woman Combing Her Hair. 1937. Wrought iron, 6’10” high. Lent by Mme Roberta Gonzalez-Hartung, Paris
Ferber, Herbert. American. Spheroid, II. 1952. Copper, brass, lead, 33 x 47". Lent by the Betty Parsons Gallery, N. Y.
Hare, David. American. *Figure with Bird*. 1951. Steel and iron, 35" high. Lent by the Kootz Gallery, New York


Picasso, Pablo. Spanish. 
Shepherd Holding a Lamb.  
1944. Bronze, 7'4" high. 
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. 
R. Sturgis Ingersoll, 
Penllyn, Pa.
Lipchitz, Jacques.
French. Prayer. 1943.
Bronze, 42 1/2" high.
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. R.
Sturgis Ingersoll,
Penllyn, Pa.
Manzu, Giacomo. Italian. Child on Chair. 1949. Bronze, 49\(\frac{3}{4}\)" high. Lent by the artist

MARINI, MARINO, ITALIAN. Horse. 1951. Bronze, c. 7'3" high. Lent by Nelson A. Rockefeller, New York
CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION

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Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, England; Museum of Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan; Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo; The Art Institute of Chicago; The Arts Club of Chicago; Kunstmuseum, Duisburg, Germany; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; The Metropolitan Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Fairmount Park Art Association, Philadelphia; City Art Museum of St. Louis; Washington University, St. Louis; Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo, Brazil.


CATALOGUE

Works marked with an asterisk are illustrated

ARCHİPENKO, ALEXANDER. AMERICAN


* 1 Woman Combing Her Hair. 1915. Bronze, 13 3/4" high. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. George Heard Hamilton, New Haven. Ill. p. 16

ARP, JEAN (HANS). FRENCH


2 Configuration. 1932. Wood, c. 27 1/2 x 33 1/2". Philadelphia Museum of Art, A. E. Gallatin Collection


BARLACH, ERNST. GERMAN


* 4 Man Drawing Sword. 1911. Wood, 31" high. Lent by the Museum of Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Ill. p. 11

BILL, MAX. SWISS


BOCCIONI, UMBERTO. ITALIAN


BRANCUSI, CONSTANTIN, ROMANIAN

Born Craiova, Romania, 1876. Attended local art school; trained also in cabinet making. Studied Bucharest academy until 1902. Settled permanently Paris, 1904. Studied Ecole des Beaux-Arts under Mercier, left 1906 at advice of Rodin. Early work influenced by Rodin. Pioneer in use of abstract forms; influenced by primitive art, principally in wood carvings. Style has been perfected and expanded, but virtually unchanged since about 1910. Has been a pervasive influence on 20th-century sculpture. Lives in Paris.


10 Golden Bird. 1919. Polished bronze, 37" high, stone pedestal 9", wood pedestal 39". Lent by The Arts Club of Chicago. (Exhibited in Chicago only)

11 Mile Pogany. 1920. Polished bronze, 17" high. Lent by the Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo. (Exhibited in Chicago and New York)


16 The Fish. 1930. Marble, 71" long. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. (Exhibited in New York only)

17 The Miracle. 1938. Marble, 60" long. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, on loan from the artist

CALDER, ALEXANDER, AMERICAN


DUCHAMP-VILLON, RAYMOND. FRENCH
Born Danville, 1876. Brother of Marcel Duchamp and Jacques Villon. Gave up medical studies for sculpture, c. 1898. Self-taught. Early work influenced by Rodin; cubism point of departure for work after 1912. Concerned also with architecture; designed exhibition house for Salon d’Automne, 1912. Served as army doctor in World War I. Died Cannes, 1918.

27 *Baudelaire*. 1911. Bronze, 15½” high. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Alexander M. Bing, New York

28 *The Horse*. 1914. Bronze, 40” high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, van Gogh Purchase Fund. This cast was made after the sculptor’s death by his brothers Jacques Villon and Marcel Duchamp, who enlarged the original model according to the artist’s instructions. Ill. p. 16

EPSTEIN, JACOB. BRITISH


ESHERICK, WHARTON. AMERICAN


FERBER, HERBERT. AMERICAN

32 *Spheroid*. II. 1952. Copper, brass, lead, 33x47”. Lent by the Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 27

FLANNAGAN, JOHN B. AMERICAN
Born Fargo, North Dakota, 1895. Studied painting 1914-17, Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Began carving in wood c. 1922 with encouragement of Arthur B. Davies. After 1928 worked exclusively as sculptor. Preferred direct carving as method, fieldstone as material. Gave up stone cutting in 1939 for reasons of health; turned to metal, working directly on unfinished bronze casts. Died by suicide, 1942.


GABO, NAUM. AMERICAN

34 *Column*. 1933. Glass, plastic, metal, wood, 41” high. Lent by the artist.


36 *Construction in Space*. 1952. Phosphor, bronze, aluminum, stainless steel, c. 42 x 30”. Lent by the artist. Ill. p. 19

GIACOMETTI, ALBERTO. SWISS


GONZALEZ, JULIO. SPANISH

41 Maternity. 1933. Wrought iron, 55" high. Lent by Mme Roberta Gonzalez-Hartung, Paris

42 Head. 1936? Wrought iron, 17 1/4" high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York

43 La Montserrat. 1937. Sheet iron, 65" high. Lent by the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

44 Woman Combing Her Hair. 1937. Wrought iron, 6'10" high. Lent by Mme Roberta Gonzalez-Hartung, Paris. Il. p. 22

HARE, DAVID. American


45 Figure with Bird. 1951. Steel and iron, 35" high. Lent by the Kootz Gallery, New York. Il. p. 28

HARKAVY, MINNA. American


HEPWORTH, BARBARA. British


47 The Coden Head. 1949. Blue marble, 24" high. Lent by the City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, England

KOLLWITZ, KATHE. German


48 Grief. c. 1936. Bronze, 10 1/2 x 10". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn, New York

LACHAISE, GASTON. American


49 Standing Woman. 1912-27. Bronze, 70" high. The Art Institute of Chicago. (Exhibited in Chicago only)

50 Two Floating Figures. c. 1925-28. Bronze, 12" high. Lent by Dr. Maurice Fried, New York

*51 Floating Figure. 1927. Bronze (cast 1935), 53" high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, given anonymously in memory of the artist. Il. p. 9


LAESSAW, IBRAM. American


LAURENS, HENRI. French


54 Mermaid. 1945. Bronze, 45 1/4" high. Lent by the Curt Valentin Gallery, New York


LEHMBruck, WILHELM. German


*58 Seated Youth. 1918? Bronze, 41 1/2" high. Lent by the Kunstmuseum, Duisburg, Germany. Il. p. 10
LIPCHITZ, JACQUES. FRENCH


60 *Pegasus. 1929. Bronze, 14½" high. Lent by Mrs. T. Catesby Jones, New York


62 *Prayer. 1943. Bronze, 42½" high. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Penllyn, Pa. Ill. p. 33

LIPPOLD, RICHARD. AMERICAN


*63 Reunion. 1951. Copper, brass, nichrome, enameled wires, 2½" high. Lent by the Willard Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 21

MAILLOL, ARISTIDE. FRENCH


65 *Young Cyclist. c. 1904. Bronze, 38½" high (with base). Lent by the Curt Valentin Gallery, New York

66 *Seated Figure. c. 1930? Terra cotta, 9" high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of Mrs. Saidie A. May

67 *The River. c. 1939-43. Lead, 7'6" long, 53¼" high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund

MALLDARELLI, ORONZIO. AMERICAN


MANZU, GIACOMO. ITALIAN


*69 Child on Chair. 1949. Bronze, 49½" high. Lent by the artist. Ill. p. 34

MARCKS, GERHARD. GERMAN


MARINI, MARINO. ITALIAN


*71 *Dancer. 1949. Bronze, 68" high (with base). Lent by the Curt Valentin Gallery, New York

72 *Stravinsky. 1950. Bronze, 9" high. Lent by the Curt Valentin Gallery, New York

MARTINI, ARTURO, ITALIAN


MATISSE, HENRI, FRENCH

75 The Slave. 1900-03. 36¾” high. The Art Institute of Chicago, Edward E. Ayer Collection
76 Reclining Nude, 1. 1907. Bronze, 13½” high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

78 The Back, III. 1929? Bronze, 6’2¾” high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund

MODIGLIANI, AMEDEO, ITALIAN


MOORE, HENRY, BRITISH

80 Reclining Figure. 1935. Elm wood, 19” high, 35” long. Lent by the Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, Room of Contemporary Art, Ill. p. 15
81 Sculpture. 1937. Bird’s eye marble, 15½” long. Lent by the Curt Valentin Gallery, New York
84 Double Standing Figure. 1950. Bronze, 7’3” high. Lent by the Curt Valentin Gallery, New York

NOGUCHI, ISAMU, AMERICAN

*85 Cronos. 1949. Balsa wood, 76” high. Lent by the Egan Gallery, New York, Ill. p. 25

PEVSNER, ANTOINE, FRENCH

86 Portrait of Marcel Duchamp. 1926. Celluloid on zinc, 37½x25¾”. Lent by the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven. (Exhibited in New York only)
87 Abstraction. 1927. Brass, 23½x24¾”. Lent by Washington University, St. Louis
* 88 Developable Column. 1942. Brass and oxidized bronze, 20¾” high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Ill. p. 18

PICASSO, PABLO, SPANISH
Painter-sculptor. Born Malaga, Spain, 1881. Carved, modeled and constructed sculpture occasionally during early career: 1899-1905, modeled heads and figures; “Negro” period, 1907, wood carvings; cubism, 1912-14, cubist still-life constructions. Turned again to sculpture, 1929-34, working in many directions, notably metal constructions with technical instruction from Gonzalez. Set up sculpture
studio at Boisgeloup, 1933, began working in larger scale. Since 1941 has again devoted considerable time to sculpture. Lives in Vallauris, France.

89 Woman's Head. 1909. Bronze, 16 1/4" high. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel A. Marx, Chicago

90 Figure. 1931. Bronze, 23 3/4" high. Lent by Mrs. Meric Callery, New York

91 Shepherd Holding a Lamb. 1944. Bronze, 7' 4" high. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Penllyn, Pa. Ill. p. 32


RENOIR, AUGUSTE. FRENCH


93 Judgment of Paris. 1914. Bronze, 28 3/4 x 35 1/2 x 6". Lent by the Cleveland Museum of Art, J. H. Wade Collection


RODIN, AUGUSTE. FRENCH


95 The Defense. 1878. Bronze, 45" high. Private collection, New York

96 St. John the Baptist. 1878-80. Bronze, 6' 3 1/2" high. Lent by the City Art Museum of St. Louis. Ill. p. 6

ZORACH, WILLIAM. AMERICAN


102 Floating Figure. 1922. African mahogany, 9' high x 33 3/4" long. Lent by the Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, Room of Contemporary Art. Ill. p. 11

ROSZAK, THEODORE J. AMERICAN

A FEW BOOKS ON SCULPTURE


GIEDION-WELCKER, C. Modern plastic art. Zurich, Girberger, 1937. (A new edition of this important work will be issued in 1953 by Wittenborn, Schultz, New York.)


RITCHIE, ANDREW CARNDUFF. Sculpture of the twentieth century. N.Y., Museum of Modern Art, 1953

ROTHSCHILD, LINCOLN. Sculpture through the ages. N.Y., McGraw-Hill, 1942.


See also extensive list of catalogues and monographs published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, on individual sculptors such as Alexander Calder, John B. Flannagan, Naum Gabo, Antoine Pevsner, Gaston Lachaise, as well as national and international exhibitions such as Cubism and Abstract Art, German Painting and Sculpture, Twentieth-Century Italian Art, Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America, 14 Americans and many others.