

Sculpture: Wilhelm Lehmbruck, Aristide Maillol

Author

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
WILHELM LEHMBRUCK
ARISTIDE MAILLOL

EXHIBITION OF
SCULPTURE

730 FIFTH AVENUE · NEW YORK

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

WILHELM
LEHMBRUCK

SCULPTURE

ARISTIDE
MAILLOL

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1930

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730 FIFTH AVENUE : NEW YORK

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INTRODUCTION

There are few works of sculpture of the twentieth century that show a more distinctly different approach to the problem of form than those of Wilhelm Lehmbruck and Aristide Maillol. The difference, in part, is racial but it is more fundamentally allied to the traditional juxtaposition of north to south—of the Gothic to the Classical. Yet to call Maillol merely an imitator of the Greek or Lehmbruck a copyist of Gothic saints is only to minimize their work. For the difference in their sculpture lies more directly in our subjective reaction to form used in two highly diverse ways. With Maillol it is primarily a means of expressing physical action—with Lehmbruck it is an accessory to a spiritual mood. For Maillol it is a means of expressing a controlled and organized realism—for Lehmbruck an aid in defining a “mental” rather than a physical state of an object.

Among the men of his time Maillol stands supreme in his ability to convey a sense of form and its component, physical movement. This, it would seem, depends less on his ability to model, great as it is, or upon his sense of a curvilinear continuity in well-expressed bodily shapes, than upon his feeling of what we may call for lack of a better term “continued motion.” We may explain it as the subtle description of the position of an object so indicated that we feel it as having arrived at the point at which we view it from a former position and as about to continue to its completed movement cycle and a stable condition of equilibrium. There is thus definitely involved in looking at a striding Maillol torso a time element. It is as if it were temporarily held stationary, snapped in that brief second by the shutter of a camera—a pause in a continued movement. One finds, therefore, activity in repose in Maillol. This subtle implication of “the next move” accounts for much of the power in his work to retain vitality—we are always expectant, and it unconsciously marks the important difference between the “posed” statue and the “active” statue. It is not to be implied that there is no repose in Maillol’s work. It is, however, a repose capable of action in a subsequent moment.

In his sense of a component balance of structural forces in the building up of form Maillol follows closely the Greek ideal. One form flows into another eliminating angularity, and a counterbalance is contrived which borders upon instability (potential action) yet frequently without directly indicating action. But the Greek ideal of the norm is, as one would suspect, entirely lacking.

It becomes apparent from this very summary discussion of Maillol's style that the ability to create a mood is almost non-existent in his work. Thus Lehmbruck's departure from realism in physical form suggests at once his preoccupation with the spiritual.

The Gothic craftsmen of the north, impressed with the importance of spiritual preparation for the world to come, felt in the repression of the physical a simple indication of religious fervor. Greco in Spain terminates a long line of artists who recognized the aesthetic value of this means—this strange attenuation, in subjectively influencing those who stood pondering their painting. The departure then from a physical reality fixes at once more attention to compositional arrangement as such. For this reason, partly, there is less of Maillol's physical dynamic quality in Lehmbruck's work and more of "design." The structural feeling alters. It is less influenced by classical tradition. It becomes more structurally suggestive of a form rather than appearing in the reality of the form itself. There is, accordingly, in Lehmbruck's sculpture more of the quality of an action relative to a mental state—a moving tenseness born of the man himself, for the nervous tensivity of a life that ended in tragedy goes into Lehmbruck's work.

Lehmbruck is little interested in the physical—the fine movement of a swinging stride or the downward circle of an arm. The physical for him is a resultant of the mental. Action may be the frenzy of despair—repose, the indication of a weary soul or again it may hinge more abstractly upon pure design, but there must always be for him in his sculpture something which commands, "think!"—not *of* it but *with* it. Something which evades us but holds us, a strange rapport between a thing lifeless, yet *knowing*, and ourselves.

J. A.

CHRONOLOGY

WILHELM LEHMBRUCK

- 1881 Born at Duisburg-Meiderich, Germany
- 1895-99 Studied at Art School
- 1901-09 Studied in the Academy at Düsseldorf
- 1910-14 Worked in Paris
- 1919 Died

ARISTIDE MAILLOL

- 1861 Born at Banyuls (Roussillon) in the Pyrenees
- 1882 Paris. Studied painting at École des Beaux Arts under Cabanel. Friend of Puvis de Chavannes, Maurice Denis, and Paul Gauguin. Worked at painting and made cartoons for tapestry.
- 1900 In his fortieth year commenced his work in sculpture.

CATALOG

An asterisk before a number indicates that the picture is illustrated by the half-tone reproduction bearing the same number.

SCULPTURE BY LEHMBRUCK

- *₁ STANDING WOMAN
Bronze, height 76 inches
Private Collection, New York
Lent through the courtesy of The Brooklyn Museum
- *₂ HEAD OF A YOUNG WOMAN
Terra Cotta, height 20 inches
Collection Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo
- ₃ STANDING FEMALE FIGURE
Terra Cotta, height 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches
Collection Detroit Institute of Arts
- *₄ HEAD OF A MAN
Terra Cotta, height 21 inches
Private Collection, New York
- *₅ FIGURE OF A WOMAN
Composition, height 36 inches
Collection Dr. F. H. Hirschland, New York
- *₆ FIGURE OF A WOMAN
Composition, height 28 inches
Private Collection, New York
- *₇ TORSO OF A WOMAN
Composition, height 40 inches
Collection Hillyer Art Gallery, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts
- ₈ WOMAN LOOKING BACK
Terra Cotta, height 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
Collection The Weyhe Gallery, New York

SCULPTURE BY MAILLOL

- *₉ TORSO OF A YOUNG WOMAN
Bronze, height 43 inches
Collection Museum of Modern Art, New York
Gift of A. Conger Goodyear

- *₁₀ DESIRE
Plaster relief, 47 x 45 inches
Lent by the Sculptor

- ₁₁ SUMMER
Plaster, height 64 inches
Lent by the Sculptor

- *₁₂ SPRING
Plaster, height 58 inches
Lent by the Sculptor

- *₁₃ TORSO OF "CHAINED ACTION"
Bronze, height 46 inches
Collection Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

- *₁₄ TORSO OF A WOMAN
Bronze, height 34 inches
Collection Maurice L. Stone, New York

- ₁₅ HEAD OF THE PAINTER RENOIR
Bronze, height 16 inches
Collection John A. Dunbar, New York

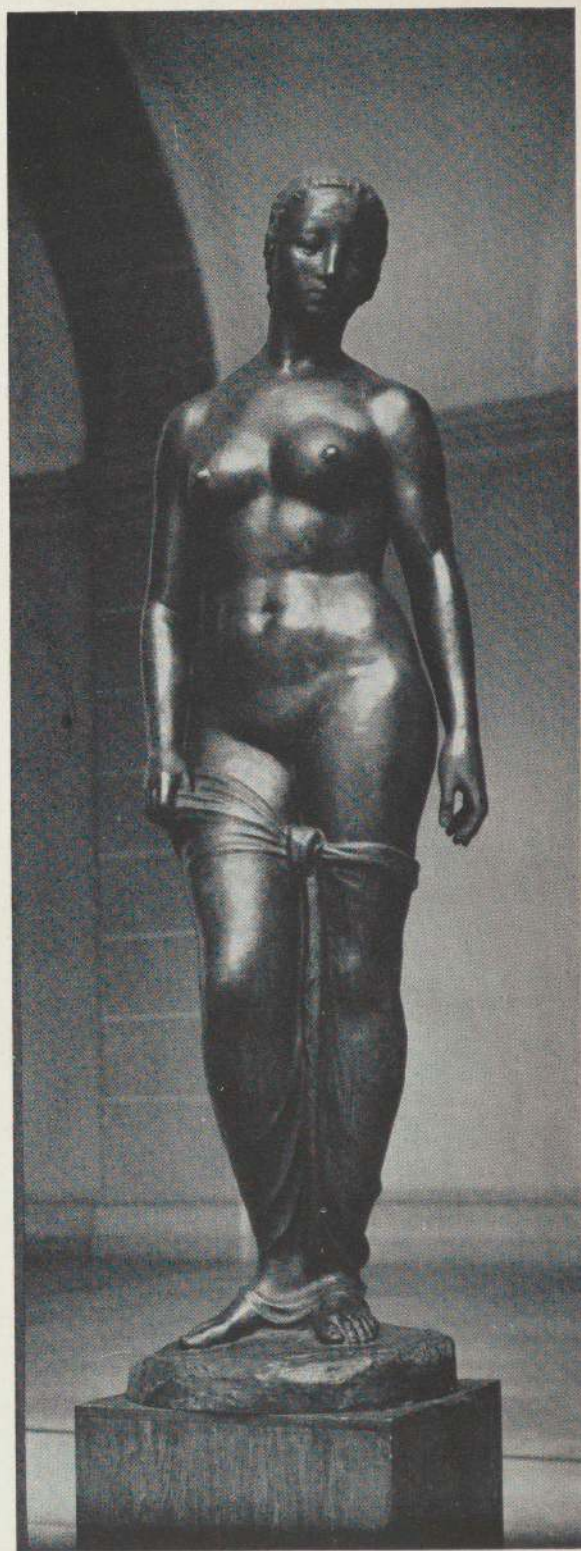
- *₁₆ HEAD OF A GIRL
Bronze, height 13 inches
Collection Mrs. Charles J. Liebman, New York

- ₁₇ VENUS
Bronze, height 69 inches
Collection John A. Dunbar, New York

- ₁₈ GRIEF
Wax, height 6 inches
Private Collection, New York

- ₁₉ TORSO OF A WOMAN
Terra Cotta, height 6½ inches
Private Collection, Buffalo

- 20 HEAD OF VENUS
Bronze, height $16\frac{3}{4}$ inches
Collection Detroit Institute of Arts
- 21 RECLINING NUDE
Terra Cotta, length $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches
Private Collection, New York
- 22 STUDY FOR "HOMAGE À CÉZANNE"
Terra Cotta, length $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches
Private Collection, New York
- 23 REVERY
Terra Cotta, length 6 inches
Private Collection, New York
- 24 FIGURE WITH DRAPERY
Plaster, height $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches
Private Collection, New York
- 25 STANDING FIGURE
Plaster, height $14\frac{1}{4}$ inches
Private Collection, New York
- 26 TORSO OF A WOMAN
Terra Cotta, height 6 inches
Private Collection, New York
- 27 STANDING DRAPED FIGURE
Plaster, height $21\frac{1}{4}$ inches
Private Collection, New York



LEHMBRUCK I

STANDING WOMAN. Bronze, height 76 inches
Private Collection, New York
Lent through the courtesy of The Brooklyn Museum



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HEAD OF A YOUNG WOMAN

Terra cotta, height 20 inches

Collection Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo



LEHMBRUCK 4

HEAD OF A MAN

Terra cotta, height 21 inches
Private Collection, New York



5 LEHMBRUCK

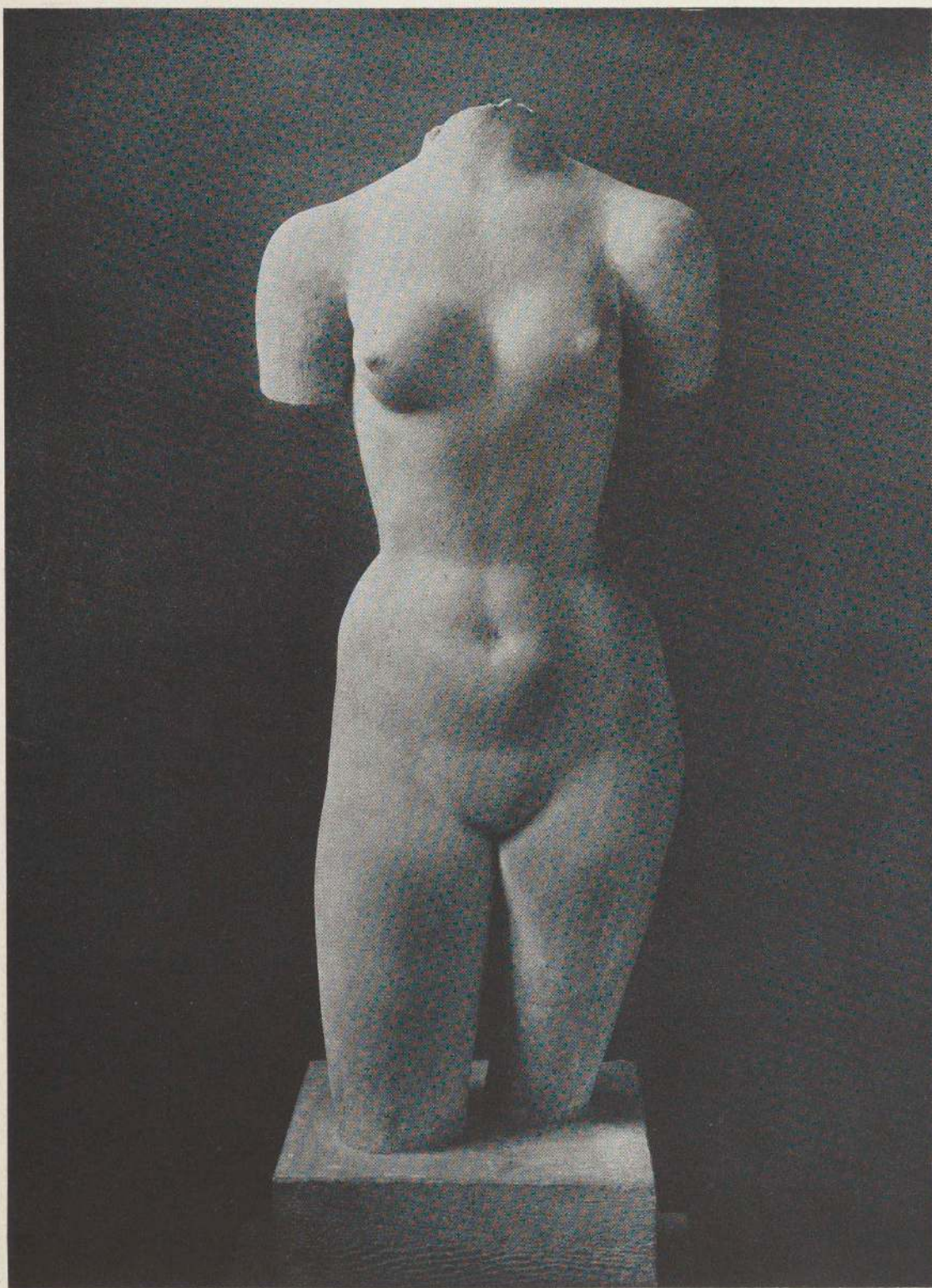
FIGURE OF A WOMAN

Composition, height 36 inches

Collection Dr. F. H. Hirschland, New York



LEHMBRUCK 6
FIGURE OF A WOMAN
Composition, height 28 inches
Private Collection, New York



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TORSO OF A WOMAN

Composition, height 40 inches

Collection Hillyer Art Gallery, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts



MAILLOL 9
TORSO OF A YOUNG WOMAN
Bronze, height 43 inches
Collection Museum of Modern Art, New York



IO MAILLOL

DESIRE

Plaster relief, 47 x 45 inches

Lent by the Sculptor

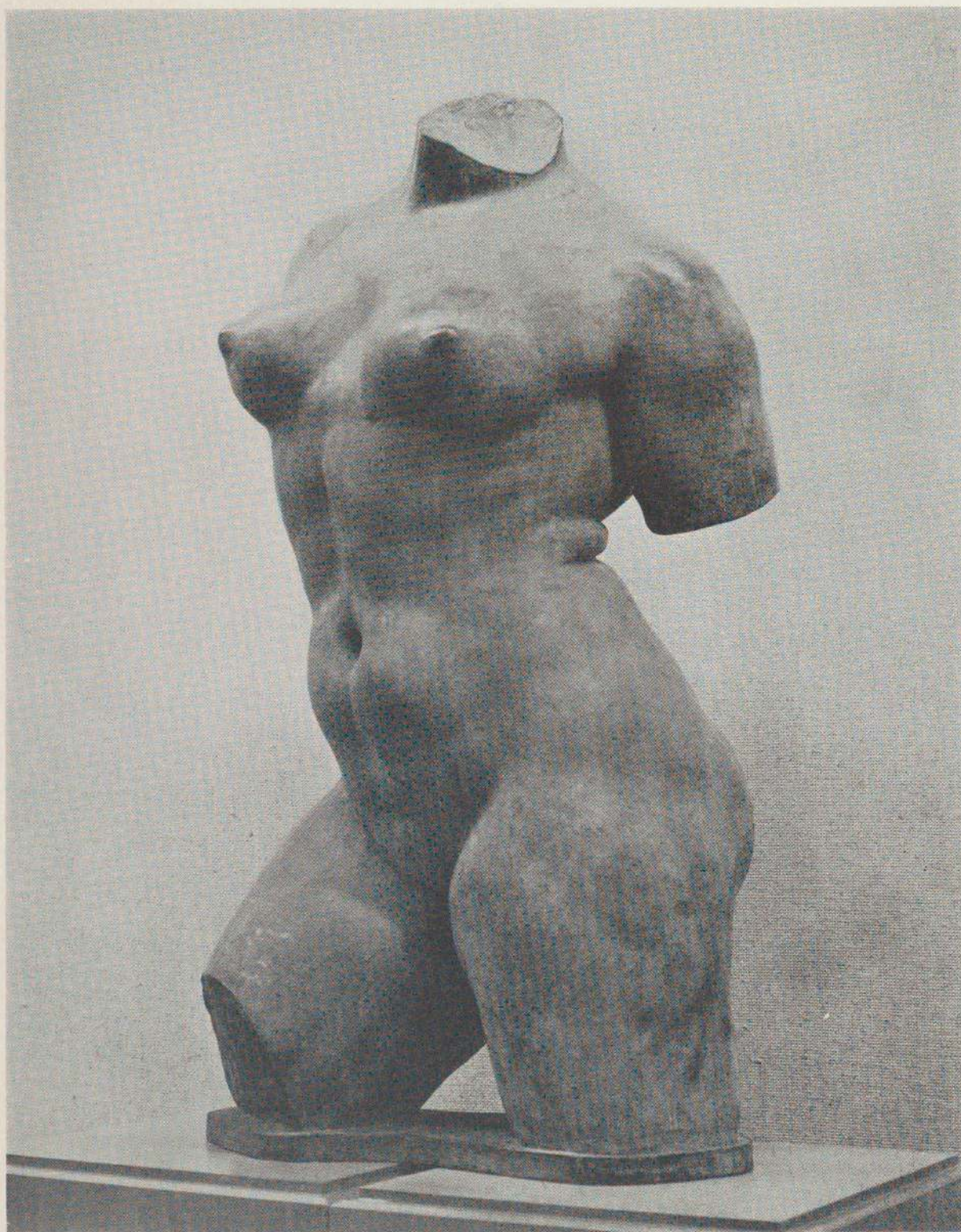


MAILLOL 12

SPRING

Plaster, height 58 inches

Lent by the Sculptor



13 MAILLOL

TORSO OF "CHAINED ACTION"

Bronze, height 46 inches

Collection Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



MAILLOL 14

TORSO OF A WOMAN

Bronze, height 34 inches

Collection Maurice L. Stone, New York



16 MAILLOL

HEAD OF A GIRL

Bronze, height 13 inches

Collection Mrs. Charles J. Liebman, New York

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