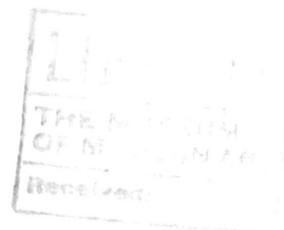


# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8000



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## ONE-MAN EXHIBITION OF SCULPTURE BY ELIE NADELMAN

A retrospective exhibition of the many and varied sculptures and drawings by Elie Nadelman (1882-1946) will be on view in the third floor galleries from October 6 to November 28 at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York. The exhibition material has been assembled by Mr. Lincoln Kirstein, long associated with the Museum, who has spent nearly two years sorting, arranging and repairing the 1,000 works found in the artist's home after his death. Mr. Kirstein is also the author of an illustrated monograph on Nadelman, published in connection with the exhibition. The exhibition has been installed by Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director of Curatorial Departments at the Museum.

This all but forgotten artist, once well known and often exhibited in New York, was a pioneer in the early days of vanguard art and an influential figure among the progressive artists of Paris at the beginning of the century. Born in Warsaw in Russian-Poland, where he received an academic art education, he went to Paris in 1903 at the age of 21 and there decided to devote himself entirely to the root problems of sculpture to find out of what plastic form was composed. Analytical drawings made in these early years are included in the exhibition. They demonstrate his experimental investigation into the nature of physical matter and are a key to his entire work.

Nadelman wrote regarding them:

"They introduced into painting and sculpture abstract form, until then wholly lacking. Cubism was only an imitation of the abstract form of these drawings...."

Mr. Kirstein comments on the influence of Nadelman on other artists as follows:

"Although Nadelman's claim to invention of cubism is extravagant, I believe it can be amply demonstrated that his work had a considerable influence upon many of his contemporaries in Paris in the early years of the century, and that in work done in 1909, Picasso, who had visited Nadelman's studio, showed evidence of his study of Nadelman's drawing and sculpture. Later, in this country, Nadelman's influence on American artists became apparent in the work of such men as Arthur B. Davies, George Bellows and Gaston Lachaise."

A friend of Gertrude and Leo Stein and of many of the artists then working in Paris and later to become leaders in modern art, Nadelman held his first one-man show in 1909 and received much acclaim.

From this time on his patronage and success were assured. Two years later in London a comprehensive exhibition of his sculpture and drawings was bought in its entirety by Madame Helena Rubinstein, always his greatest patron, who used the sculpture as a trademark-symbol for the scientific beautification of modern woman. His work was first seen in this country at the Armory Show in 1913 which included a dozen of his drawings and a plaster head. At the outbreak of the war in 1914, he came to New York, and the following year he was given a one-man show by Alfred Stieglitz in his "291" gallery. All his exhibitions were highly successful, and he soon found himself overwhelmed with commissions for figures and portraits. He installed himself in a functioning studio-shop in the manner of Rodin, whom he greatly admired, and employed as many as three assistants making portraits of numerous well-known figures of the day. He became a prominent figure in the "High Bohemia" depicted in the early novels of Carl van Vechten.

In 1920 Nadelman married Mrs. Joseph A. Flannery, a widow, and they bought an estate at Riverdale on the Hudson which they started to fill with European and American folk art. This primitive craftsmanship was of great interest to Nadelman, and its influence is apparent in his work. But at the time when he was making his collection, such interest was unknown elsewhere. The collection became the finest ever assembled in the United States and was later divided between the New York Historical Society and Colonial Williamsburg.

In the crash of 1929 the Nadelmans lost almost all their resources, and from then on Nadelman remained in complete retirement. His last one-man show was held in 1927 at the Knoedler Galleries. After this, despite enormous productivity in his self-imposed exile, he refused to show or sell anything. The estate and the folk art collection were sold, although later Nadelman was able to re-purchase the house where his widow still lives and where hundreds of sculptures, many broken, were found discarded in cellar and attic after his death in 1946. Using his own kiln, he spent his last years working on experimental pottery and small, inexpensive sculpture in all kinds and combinations of media. He came out of his retirement during the war only for the purpose of doing volunteer work in occupational therapy at Bronx Veterans' Hospital where he helped in some notable cures.

The exhibition consists of 43 sculptures in all media, a group of small plaster figures and a group of drawings.