Sculpture of the twentieth century

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SCULPTURE
OF THE
TWENTIETH
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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 temperament 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 objective 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, transcendental 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 considered 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, 6'8½" high. Lent by the City Art Museum of St. Louis.
Renoir, Auguste. French.
_Washerwoman_. 1917. Bronze, 43" high. Lent by the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Degas, Edgar. French.
_Woman Seated in Armchair_. 1896-1911. Bronze, 12½" high. The Art Institute of Chicago

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, 31½” high. Lent by the
Museum of Cranbrook Academy
of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
Brancusi, Constantin, Rumanian. The Chief. 1925. Wood, 20" high (with base, 71\(\frac{1}{2}\)" high). Lent by Mrs. Pierre Matisse, New York. (Exhibited in Chicago and New York)

Arp, Jean (Hans), French.
Growth, 1938. Bronze, 31½" high.
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. Street-cart. 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
Hare, David. American. *Figure with Bird*. 1951. Steel and iron, 35" high. Lent by the Kootz Gallery, New York

Opposite: Epstein, Jacob, British. 

Despiau, Charles, French. 

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, 42½" high.
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. R.
Sturgis Ingersoll,
Penllyn, Pa.
Manzu, Giacomo. Italian. Child on Chair. 1949. Bronze, 49⅜" high. Lent by the artist

Marcks, Gerhard. German. Maja. 1942. Bronze, 7' high. Fairmount Park Art Association, Philadelphia
CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION

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CATALOGUE

Works marked with an asterisk are illustrated

ARCHIPENKO, ALEXANDER. AMERICAN


* 1 Woman Combing Her Hair. 1915. Bronze, 13¾” high. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. George Heard Hamilton, New Haven. Ill. p. 16

ARP, JEAN (HANS). FRENCH


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. Rumanian


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 Mille 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 1/2" 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 Damville, 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


*30 Madonna and Child. 1927. Bronze, 67" high. Lent by Miss Sally Ryan, Georgetown, Connecticut. Ill. p. 31

ESHERICK, WHARTON. AMERICAN


FERBER, HERBERT. AMERICAN


*32 Spheroid, II. 1952. Copper, brass, lead, 33 x 47". 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. 1923. 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
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. Ill. p. 22
45 Figure with Bird. 1951. Steel and iron, 35" high. Lent by the Kootz Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 28
47 The Coddin Head. 1949. Blue marble, 24" high. Lent by the City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, England
48 Grief. c. 1938. Bronze, 10½ x 10". Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Erich Cohn, New York
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. Ill. p. 9
53 Monoceros. 1952. Bronze, 46¾" high. Lent by the Kootz Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 21
54 Mermaid. 1945. Bronze, 45¾" high. Lent by the Curt Valentin Gallery, New York
55 Luna. 1948. Marble, 33¾" high. Lent by the Curt Valentin Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 35
58 Seated Youth. 1918? Bronze, 41½" high. Lent by the Kunstmuseum, Duisburg, Germany. Ill. p. 10

HARE, DAVID. AMERICAN

HARKAVY, MINNA. AMERICAN

HEpwORTH, BARBARA. BRITISH
Born Wakefield, Yorkshire, 1903. Studied, 1919-23, Leeds School and Royal College of Art, London. Italy three years, turned from modeling to carving. Lives in St. Ives, Cornwall.

KOLLWITZ, KATHE. GERMAN

LAURENS, HENRI. FRENCH

LEHMBRUCK, WILHELM. GERMAN

LACHAISE, GASTON. AMERICAN
LIPCHITZ, JACQUES. FRENCH


59 Man with a Guitar, c. 1915? Stone, 38⅞" high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund

60 Pegasus, 1929. Bronze, 14⅜" high. Lent by Mrs. T. Catesby Jones, New York


*62 Prayer, 1943. Bronze, 42⅜" high. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Penllwyn, Pa. Ill. p. 33

LIPPOLD, RICHARD. AMERICAN


*63 Reunion, 1951. Copper, brass, nichrome, enameled wires, 23⅞" high. Lent by the Willard Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 21

MAILLOL, ARISTIDE. FRENCH


*64 Mediterranéen, c. 1901. Bronze, 41" high. Lent by Stephen C. Clark, New York. Ill. p. 8

65 Young Cyclist, c. 1904. Bronze, 38⅞" 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, 76" long, 53⅞" high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund

MALDARELLI, ORONZIO. AMERICAN


MANZU, GIACOMO. ITALIAN


*69 Child on Chair, 1949. Bronze, 49⅜" high. Lent by the artist. Ill. p. 34

MARCKS, GERHARD. GERMAN


*70 Maja, 1942. Bronze, 7' high. Fairmount Park Art Association, Philadelphia. Ill. p. 35

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, I. 1907. Bronze, 13½" high. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, acquired through the Lilly P. Bliss Bequest


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, 7½" high. Lent by the Curt Valentin Gallery, New York

NOGUCHI, ISAMU, AMERICAN


PEVSNER, ANTOINE, FRENCH

86 *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp. 1926. Celluloid on zinc, 37½"x25½". Lent by the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven. (Exhibited in New York only)
87 *Abstraction. 1927. Brass, 23½"x24½". Lent by Washington University, St. Louis

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 3/4" 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, 6'3/4" high. Lent by the City Art Museum of St. Louis. Ill. p. 6

ROSZAK, THEODORE J. AMERICAN


SMITH, DAVID. AMERICAN


100 The Banquet. 1951. Steel, 53 3/4" x 6'1 1/2". Lent by the Willard Gallery, New York. Ill. p. 20

VIANI, ALBERTO. ITALIAN


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

A FEW BOOKS ON SCULPTURE


GIEDION-WELCKER, C. Modern plastic art. Zurich, Girsberger, 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.