

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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The first modern equestrian sculpture to be installed in a New York plaza, a monumental 8-foot bronze rearing horse and rider by the famous Italian artist Marino Marini, has been placed on view in the Museum of Modern Art Sculpture Garden.

Acquired for the Museum Collection through the Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, The Miracle was executed in 1953-54.

"Marino Marini's powerful and memorable series of horses and riders began around 1936," James Thrall Soby, Chairman of the Museum's Collection Committee says, "but it was his experience in Milan during World War II that gave the series a new conviction and impact. He saw the Lombard peasants and workmen fleeing the British bombings on their terrified horses. The impression was unforgettable.

"It seems likely, however, that Marini would have continued to create sculptures of horsemen even if he had not seen first-hand the fright of war. The theme is, of course, central to the great Italian tradition in sculpture and is the subject of two world-famous Renaissance monuments - Donatello's Gattamelata at Padua and Verrocchio's Colleone at Venice. But to both these masterpieces Marini prefers the less sophisticated and more ancient equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius in the Piazza del Campidoglio at Rome. His preferences are nearly always typical of his philosophy as an artist. He likes forces more than refinement in sculpture; the perfections of the Renaissance and the conceits of Mannerism are alien to his nature. He reveres instead the cruder energy of medieval sculptors like Giovanni Pisano and Tino da Camaino, whose striving is more bluntly apparent. 'To be an artist,' Marini once said, 'is simple, it is simplicity which is difficult.'"

The horse's rearing strength is suggested by drastic and arbitrary elisions of contour, by a subtle transition from the rounded volume of the animal's belly to the flattened, angular planes of its outstretched neck. The rider's precarious balance is defined by a lateral counterthrust of form which in daring of placing seems an original and evocative invention of the artist.

The Miracle was cast in bronze in Milan, where Marini lives and works because he likes that city's atmosphere of contemporary, industrial energy more than the quieter ambiance of his native Tuscany. Other casts are in the Kunsthalle at Mannheim and in a public square at Rotterdam.

The Museum of Modern Art owns two busts by Marini, a 3-foot standing horse and rider and a drawing.

Photographs and further information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. Circle 5-8900.