

The Museum of Modern Art

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The first linear, metal-rod sculpture by Picasso ever realized on a large scale, and the first such sculpture in any size to enter a public or private collection, has been erected in The Museum of Modern Art's Garden.

Manufactured of Cor-ten steel, the 13-foot construction is the realization of a project which goes back to 1928-29 when the original model was made. These "drawing in air" sculptures -- Picasso made four -- represented his second dramatic and radical re-orientation of the art of sculpture: he had earlier revolutionized sculpture with his first sheet-metal construction Guitar of 1912 (also a gift by him to the Museum). Though known then only through photographs, the metal-rod sculptures exerted an enormous influence on post World War II artists, especially in America, according to William S. Rubin, Chief Curator of the Museum's Painting and Sculpture Collection. The artist presented this recent gift to Mr. Rubin in France last June.

The four models Picasso made in 1928-29 were intended to serve as maquettes for monumental sculptures, but until now none had been realized in that scale. At the time he executed them, Picasso offered two of them to a committee which had gathered funds for a memorial monument to Picasso's friend, the poet Guillaume Apollinaire. The committee, taken aback by the radical character of the sculptures, refused them and no monument to Apollinaire was erected then. "What did they expect me to make," Picasso said later to his friend and biographer Roland Penrose, "a Muse holding a torch?"

Monument is one of several newly acquired sculptures which will be prominently shown in THE PAINTING AND SCULPTURE COLLECTION: A NEW PERSPECTIVE which opens to the public on March 14. The exhibition marks the first complete reinstallation of the painting and sculpture collection since 1964 and the first addition of gallery space for the collection since that time.

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