

MANUEL MARTINEZ HUGUÉ DIT MANOLO (1872-1945)

Portrait of a Woman

Bronze proof, # II
Sand-cast, most likely by Florentin Godard, c. 1910-11
Monogrammed and numbered (on the side, under the base) HK II
H. 16, W. 10.5, D. 11.5 cm

Provenance

- Paris, Kahnweiler gallery
- France, private collection

Bibliography

- Martinie, AH, “Manolo,” *L’Amour de l’Art* (*The Love of Art*), V. 10, # 10, October, 1929, repr. p. 352.
- *Manolo*, New York, Galerie Chalette, October 7- November 2, 1957 (preface by D-H Kahnweiler), #5.
- Gutierez, Fernando, “Antologia de Manolo Hugué,” La Vanguardia, Barcelona, April 30, 1972, fig. 3.
- Blanch, Montserrat, *Manolo Sculptures Peintures Dessins* (*Manolo Sculptures Paintings Drawings*), Editions Cercle d’Art, Paris, 1974, repr. n°415, p.242.
- *Manolo (1872-1945), sculture, disegni, dipinti*, Electa, 1990, repr. n°1, p. 27 (proof marked n°5/10).

After completing his studies at the fine arts school in Barcelona, Manolo moved to Paris in 1901, at the age of 29. Despite many rich artistic encounters in Montmartre and Montparnasse, it was an extremely difficult period for him, and he was barely making it by. He did a number of small jobs and worked on numerous drawings, watercolors, and caricatures, which he tried to sell without much success. Not many of his sculptures from this period remain because he left them behind, often unfinished, in hotel rooms that he had to flee for lack of money. What does remain are some pieces of jewelry that he made for Arnould [1] and some small portraits, including this *Portrait of a Woman*, which he did toward the end of his stay in Paris, thus between 1908 and 1910.

While living in Paris (between 1901 and 1909), he kept his distance from the aesthetic explorations of his friends Braque and Picasso. In fact, he never followed that line of development,[2] but instead, spent a lot of time in museums. He studied Egyptian and Greek art as well as religious sculpture from the Middle Ages. For the *Portrait of a Woman*, he borrowed Michelangelo's powerful facial features, such as the heavy eyelids and the distant expression of his *Dying Slave*.[3] Like Antoine Bourdelle, Manolo was inspired by the archaic, pure, and stylized forms of antiquity[4]. The rough, almost raw surface of *Portrait of a Woman* recalls Bourdelle's *Apollo's Head*. Bourdelle and Manolo not only had common aesthetic interests and aspirations, but they also shared a love of poetry, an art that Manolo cherished and worked on with a number of French writers.[5]

According to an article that appeared in 1929[6], the terra cotta of the *Portrait of a Woman* was done in 1908, yet Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler's initials, HK, on the work suggest a later date for the cast, around 1910.[7] Although Manolo didn't sign a contract with the dealer until 1912, their negotiations began in 1910, and it's conceivable that around that time, Kahnweiler began editioning his bronzes, a material that Manolo himself couldn't afford. Between 1912 and 1933, when he was between 40 and 61 years old, Manolo was under contract to Kahnweiler. Their agreement stipulated that the artist's entire production would go to the dealer in exchange for a monthly stipend. Manolo was the only sculptor that Kahnweiler supported until 1920, when he brought Henri Laurens into the exclusive circle.

All the proofs created under Kahnweiler's direction, once he'd begun to edition a work, were not signed by Manolo, but carried Kahnweiler's initials instead. Thanks to recent work by the art historian Élisabeth Lebon, we know that the proofs that are number with Roman numerals result from a collaboration between the dealer Kahnweiler and the founder Florentin Godard: "Following the discovery of the archives of the founder Florentin Godard, we now know that he was Kahweiler's founder from November, 1911 on. [. . .] In a recently

discovered and non-systematic fashion, it's apparent that Kahnweiler asked Florentin Godard to mark the proofs that he made for him with signs not visible to the viewer (either on the back of bas-reliefs or on the inside of sculptures in the round); the numbering system used Roman numerals as well as, sometimes, the initials HK, which appeared in relief. [. . .] the last commission that Kahnweiler gave to Florentin Godard dates from April, 1929".[8]

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[1] In 1890, Aimé Arnould, influenced by the emerging artistic theories of Art Nouveau, opened a jewelry studio in Paris. Inspired by nature, the work was characterized by fluid lines and voluptuous curves, which Manolo echoed in his highly stylized broaches of swans (*Cibella*, gold broach, Barcelona, Modern Art Museum) and his bas-relief plaques featuring compacted human forms (*Crouching Woman* in bronze, Paris, galerie Malaquais).

[2] Manolo to Picasso on his cubist portraits: "But what would you say if your parents met you at the Barcelona train station looking like that ?" Cited in Paule Chavasse, *Cubism and Its Epoch*, radio production for France III, 1961-62, INA archives.

[3] Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. M.R. 1590. http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=2981

[4] "For Manolo, antiquity was, as it was for Bourdelle, the foundation of the Classical spirit, a response to the need for creation and expression, which is the source of all culture." Elisée Trens Ballester, *Manolo Hugué 1872-1945*, Mont de Marsan, Musée Despiau-Wlérick, 1995, p.15

[5] "I knew the French instantly. I'd always wanted, at all costs, to assimilate the atmosphere. Odd fact—I connected more with the writers than with people working in the visual arts." Letter from Manolo to Kahnweiler (October or November 1919) published in *Donation Louise et Michel Leiris*, Paris, MNAM, 1984-1985, p. 126.

[6] Martinie, AH, "Manolo," *L'Amour de l'Art*, Volume 10, num. 10, October 1929, p. 235.

[7] Montserrat Blanch also supported this date in 1974, and it is also dated 1910 in the 1957 Galerie Chalette catalogue.

[8] An excerpt from Élisabeth Lebon's article "Laurens and the Bronze," published in the exhibition catalogue *Henri Laurens* from the Gerhard-Marcks-Haus Museum in Bremen, September 30, 2018 to January 13, 2019.