

MARINO MARINI (1901-1980)

Bust of Igor Stravinsky

Bronze
Lost-wax cast, without foundry mark
Written in Swedish under the base: “Igor Stravinsky by Marino Marini, bought at the Svensk Franska Gallery, probably in 1953.”
H. 28, W. 19.5, D. 16.5 cm

Provenance

- Stockholm, Galerie Svensk-Franska, 1953
- Elisabeth Philip Collection
- Göteborg, private collection, 2012

Exhibition

- Stockholm, Svensk-Franska Gallery, February-March, 1953, cat. n°25.

Bibliography

- *Marino Marini*, Stockholm, Svensk-Franska Gallery, catalogue n°254, February-March, 1953, n°25.
- *Sur Marini*, Paletten n°1, 1953, repr.
- G. Johansson, *Marini i Svensk-franska*, Svenska Dagbladet, February 1953 ?, repr.
- U. Apollonio, *Marino Marini, Sculptor*, 2^{e} revised edition, Milan, Edizioni del Milione, 1953, repr. n°97 (plaster).

- E. Trier, *Marino Marini*, Cologne, Der Spiegel Gallery, 1954, repr. p. 33.
- E. Trier, *Marino Marini*, Neuchâtel, Editions du Griffon, 1961.
- Alberto Busignani, *Marino Marini*, I Maestri del Novecento, Sadea Sansoni, 1968, pl. 28: reproduction of the bronze held in the Kunstmuseum of Essen (H. 32 cm).
- P. Waldberg, H. Read, *Marino Marini, The Complete Works*, Milan, Silvana éditoriale d'arte, 1970, p.103 n°277.
- C. Pirovano, *Marino Marini, Sculptor*, Milan, Electa, 1972-73, n°283.
- *Marino Marini, Sculptures & Drawings*, Arles, musée Réattu & Espace Van Gogh, March 5 – June 18, 1995, Lisbonne, Musée du Chiado, June 30 – September 10, 1995, Actes Sud, 1995, p. 98-99: reproduction of the bronze held in the Museo Marino Marini, Civiche raccolte d'arte, Milan (H. 32 cm).
- *Marino Marini, Catalogue Raisonné of the Sculptures*, introduction by G. Carandente, Milan, Skira, 1998, n°349.
- *Marino Marini*, European Academy for the Arts & Accademia Italiana London, Skira, 1999, p.299: a photograph from 1973 showing Marini in his studio in Milan, surrounded by busts, including the one of Stravinsky.
- *Vrouwen, ruiters en kardinalen, De beeldhouwkunst van Marino Marini en Gioacomo Manzù*, Beelden aan Zee Museum / Waanders Uitgevers, 2009, repr. p. 14.

Marino Marini, a Tuscan artist, became famous for his sculptures of horsemen, but his portraits were also extremely highly regarded. He was "with Despiau, one of the greatest portraitists that modern sculpture ever produced. In his work, psychological penetration was perfectly aligned with plastic perfection," wrote Edouard Trier.[1] Marini's models were often well-known personalities—artists, architects, and politicians, including Jean Arp, Henry Miller, Marc Chagall, and Mies van der Rohe.

"*For me the portrait is the most direct way in which to enter the world of humanity. The problem is to understand the personality that I have in front of me. You must bring out the personality in the portrait. But you must deal with a representative personality. Our century, I am convinced, is represented and described historically on the faces of these significant personalities. They can be writers, musicians, artists, politicians but also industrialists, businessmen, even a boxer (...). With my portraits I think I have put together a sort of history of our century. In fact however, I have preferred above all to do the portraits of 'creative' people. They don't have one but ten, a hundred, facets. Miller, for example: each moment he has a different face. The form of his expression, his eyes, changes. This is the difficulty: to find the essence of this multiplicity.*"[2]

Marini met Stravinsky (1882-1971) when he went to New York for his first show in the city, put on by Curt Valentin at the Buchholz Gallery from February 14 to March 11, 1950.

“I remember Stravinsky in New York in 1950. He came to see my exhibition at the Buchholz Gallery. Small, silent, he went up close to the statues; then he began to touch them. I had never seen anyone like him, full of love. I asked who he was: it was Stravinsky. From that meeting his portrait was born. A great master, great music, and him anxious, sensitive, nervous, and on edge. His inner being, his soul: all on his face.”[3]

This bronze bust came out of that encounter, and Marini produced it in two versions. The first version, dating from around 1950, was slightly smaller (23 cm high) and featured the composer with a moustache. The proof presented here is from the second version.

“In this portrait, which has the violence and density of a mask, the sculptor has magisterially translated the model’s sensuality through the fullness of the mouth and the enlarged profile of the ears; he has captured the bottomless doubt of a being haunted by intimations of death.”[4] More than a realistic representation of the man, it’s above all his personal presence that Marini offers us. The result is strong, raw, and aggressively plain. With a surface showing bumps and scratches, the tight modeling suggests the effects of time on the human body as well as the headstrong soul of the model.

In 1998, the catalogue raisonné of Marino Marini’s sculptures recorded eight bronze copies of this bust, as well as a plaster belonging to the Fondation Marino Marini in Pistoia.[5]

The bronzes are listed as:

- Essen, Folkwang Museum[6]
- Los Angeles, The Music Center Operating Company[7]
- Milan, The Museum of Modern Art, Marino Marini Museum[8]
- Munich, Staatsgalerie Moderner Kunst[9]
- Northampton, Smith College Museum of Art[10]

And three copies, including the one presented here, are in private collections.

In addition, according to our recent research:

- Le Museum de Fundatie à Heino/Wijhe in the Netherlands has a copy that it acquired around 1955 from the Der Spiegel Gallery in Cologne.[11]

A drawing of Stravinksy in ink on paper by Marino Marini dating from 1950 is held in the Museum of Modern Art in New York.
In 1973,
Marini was asked by Paolo Grassi, the head of La Scala, to create the sets and costumes for Stravinsky's *The Rights of Spring.*

Christian Faerber is almost certainly the source of this bust's Swedish provenance.
This art dealer, born in Naples in 1901 to a Swiss father who was the engineer of the Vesuvius funicular railway, fled Nazi Germany in 1933–1934 and settled in Sweden, where he opened a gallery in Gothenburg, the Matthiesen Gallery. Although a specialist in old master paintings, he developed a passion for the work of Marino Marini, whom he discovered at the 1952 Venice Biennale. He very quickly formed a close friendship with the artist, who created a sculpted portrait of him that same year. With the aim of introducing the artist's work to Scandinavia, he purchased 33 sculptures from him and organised a touring exhibition in Scandinavian museums, beginning in Gothenburg in January–February 1953, then continuing in Stockholm (see the exhibition catalogue from the Svensk-Franska Gallery, February–March 1953), Copenhagen and Oslo. Accompanied by a catalogue featuring an introductory text by Christian Faerber, the exhibition was a resounding success, with all the sculptures finding buyers – including several museums – and the artist having to send further works. (*The Tate Gallery 1980–82: Illustrated Catalogue of Acquisitions*, London, 1984, entry for "Portrait Bust of Christian Faerber", c.1952–53.)
The collectors Claes and Elisabeth Philip acquired this *Bust of Igor Stravinsky* at the exhibition held at the Svensk-Franska Gallery in 1953.

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[1] E. Trier, *Marino Marini*, Neuchâtel, Editions du Griffon, 1961.
[2] Marino Marini, cited in *Marino Marini*, European Academy for the Arts & Accademia Italiana London, Skira, 1999, p. 26
[3] Loc. cit.
[4] *Marino Marini, Sculptures & Dessins*, Arles, musée Réattu & Espace Van Gogh, March 5 – June 18, 1995, Lisbonne, Musée du Chiado, June 30 – September 10, 1995, Actes Sud, 1995, p. 98-99.
[5] Dimensions : 27.9 x 17.9 x 20.5 cm.
[6] Dimensions : 33,5 x 18 x 22 cm.
[7] No longer in the collection as of 1995.
[8] Today is in the collection of the Museo del Novecento de Milan, which holds the Marino Marini Collection (formerly the Marino Marini Museum), which is composed of a group of around thirty portraits given to the city by the artist.
[9] Today the Neue Pinakothek de Munich. Acquired in 1976, a gift of the artist.
[10] Rference SC 1953:90 / Dimensions: 27.3 x 19 x 21.5 cm.
[11] Height: approx. 30 cm.