



MANUEL MARTINEZ HUGUÉ DIT MANOLO (1872-1945)

The Round or The Sardana

Bas-relief

Terra cotta proof, #3

Label (on the back): GALERIE SIMON / 29 bis rue d'Astorg / PARIS (VIIIe) / 1923 / 3 /
N° 7897 / Manolo / La Ronde / 37 x 33 / Photo N°4527

H. 37, W. 33, D. 4 cm

Provenance

- Paris, galerie Simon
- France, Marcel Arland collection

Bibliography

- Pla, Josep, *Vida de Manolo contada per ell mateix*, Sabadell, 1928.
- Pia, Pascal, *Manolo*, "Sculpteurs nouveaux," Paris, Gallimard, 1930, p.33, repr.
- Benet, Rafael, *El Escultor Manolo Hugué*, coll. Miguel Angel, Libreria Editorial Argos, Barcelona, 1942.
- Blanch, Montserrat, *Manolo, sculptures, peintures, dessins*, Cercle d'art, 1974, p.67, n° 98, repr.
- *Manolo Hugué Als cinquanta anys de la seva mort*, Columna, Barcelona, Sala d'art Artur Ramon, May 4 to June 17, 1995, p. 45, n° 14, repr.
- *Manolo Hugué, 1872-1945*, Mont-de-Marsan, musée Despiau-Wlérick, June 28 - September 4, 1995, Pontoise, musée Tavet-Delacour, September 16 - November 26, 1995.

- *Manolo Hugué, Escultura, Pintura y Dibujo*, Madrid, Centro Cultural del Conde Duque, January to February, 1997, p. 56, n° 17, repr.

During his lengthy stay in Céret between 1919 and 1927, Manolo experienced a true flowering of his art. He became more confident in his very personal style and, having resumed his relationship after the war with his gallerist Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, he had sufficient financial stability that allowed him to build his own house in Céret.^[1] In 1923, the year that he created the bas-relief *The Sardana*, the galerie Simon, run by Kahnweiler, organized his first solo show. It included recent works, but also a number of earlier pieces that Kahnweiler had been able to recuperate from the collection that had been seized during the war. The show was a success, and Manolo's art was lauded by the critics. Maurice Raynal declared that "[...] Most of his busts, his figurines, his reliefs, most of his subjects, reflect an animalistic intensity of life that no other sculptor of his time has attained. And he's been able to do this precisely because that was the only thing that he wanted from his art. And this is related to his connection to Gothic art; he's adopted its flame and its supple symmetry as well as, at times, its roughness of style."^[2]

Sculpted reliefs are present throughout Manolo's œuvre. He expresses himself as easily in this form as he does in his sculptures in the round or in his numerous drawings, which are often closely linked to his sculptures. His bas-reliefs manage to strike a balance that engages the sensibilities of both drawing and work in volume. In *The Sardana*, Manolo uses the depth of the relief to indicate distance; the dancing figures in the foreground, seen from the back, are sculpted in half-volume while the figures off to the sides, moving away from the viewer, sink into the work, and those on the other side of the circle, those facing us, are no more than silhouettes sketched into the clay. The overall form of the relief, rounded toward the top, underscores the theme of the round.

The label from the Galerie Simon, which is glued on the back, states the title as simply *The Round*, but the work has been known more specifically as *La Sardane (The Sardana)* since 1930; it is mentioned as such in Pascal Pia's monograph of that year. The sardana is a traditional Catalan dance in which the dancers hold hands and dance in a circle to the music of an instrumental group known as a *cobla*. Thirty years later, Picasso, a dear friend of Manolo, did a drawing titled *La Sardane de la Paix (The Sardana of Peace)*^[3] during one of his stays in Céret. Manolo was particularly fond of demonstrations of the vigorous life spirit that he found in local folk culture. This spirit was, above all, what the artist wanted to convey, and he did so by exploring themes of dance, bullfighting, and the peasantry. In *The Sardana*, the dynamic rhythm is superbly captured by the undulating lines and the rapid sketches that emphasize its spontaneity and create a dramatic tension between more and less heavily

worked sections. "He knew perfectly how to transcribe the lively alternating steps of the regional dances and, in particular, those of the Catalan sardana."[\[4\]](#) Looking at this relief, one hears the music and feels the immediate joy of the dancing bodies. The dresses swing in tempo to the moving bodies, and the rhythmic composition of the frieze as a whole recalls the bas-reliefs of Greek art and Dionysian maenad figures.

In 1921, Manolo rapidly executed a relief of a picador[\[5\]](#) whose eloquent movement seems to be a direct reference to certain metopes from the Parthenon. That same year, in his relief titled *Au bord de l'eau* (*At the Water's Edge*),[\[6\]](#) he used an intriguing composition that employed complex effects in order to capture depth, perspective, and variations in the thickness of the relief that are similar to those found in *The Sardana*. In the relief *Les Deux Toreros* (*The Two Toreadors*)[\[7\]](#) from 1922, the circular nature of the composition is clearly related to that in *The Sardana*. He treated the theme of the dance in other works as well, such as the 1929 *Danseuse espagnole* (*Spanish Dancer*)[\[8\]](#).

This proof bears a label from the galerie Simon, which was the second gallery that D-H Kahnweiler ran. After the First World War, on September 1, 1920, the dealer, whose holdings had all been appropriated during the war, went into partnership with André Simon in order to open a new gallery at 29 bis rue d'Astorg. In the course of three auctions in 1921, 1922, and 1923, all of his goods were sold. Fortunately, he was able to buy back all of his Manolo sculptures.[\[9\]](#) When he later editioned certain models, he scrupulously recorded each proof, indicating its number and other information on a label glued discretely into the inside of the work. In this case, the proof carries the number 3, but the label does not. There is a proof of *The Sardana* in an exhibition catalogue from 1997,[\[10\]](#) that is listed as number 20, and yet the editions of terra cottas cast for the galerie Simon were generally limited to 15 proofs.

Our n° 3 comes from the well-known collection of Marcel Arland (1899-1986). This writer, essayist, literary critic, and scenarist, a friend of André Malraux, was awarded the prix Goncourt in 1929 for his novel *L'Ordre* (*The Order*). After the Second World War, he became the co-director, with Jean Paulhan, of the review *Comoedia*, which was published by Gallimard. He was also director of the NRF at Gallimard and was elected to the Académie française in 1968.

[\[1\]](#) *Ibid.*, p. 82, see also Blanch, 1974, p. 48.

[\[2\]](#) *Manolo Hugué*, 1995, p. 81

[\[3\]](#) Pablo Picasso, *La Sardane de la Paix*, 1953, charcoal, 63 x 48.8 cm, Céret, museum of modern art (Inv. MAMC 1991-0286).

[\[4\]](#) In. Mont-de-Marsan, 1995, p. 22. Excerpt from an article by Montserrat Blanch on "The Interpretation of Movement in the Sculpted Work of Manolo."

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[5] Blanch, p. 58, n° 79.

[6] Blanch, n° 447.

[7] Blanch, n° 90.

[8] Blanch, n° 120.

[9] June 13-14, 1921: the first sale of the holdings that had been appropriated by the Germans "Henry Kahnweiler Collection, modern paintings, sculptures, and ceramics" Part 1:

<https://archive.org/details/CollectionHenryKahnweiler13To14June1921/page/n25>

[10] Madrid, 1997, n° 17.