

ARLETTE GINIOUX (1944)

The Legionnaire, Bust of Gonish

Bronze proof, #2/8
Lost wax cast by Coubertin
Signed A. Ginioux
H. 36 ; W. 19 ; D. 23 cm

Bibliography

- 2014, CATALOGUE: Mont-de-Marsan, Despiau-Wlérick museum, *Arlette Ginioux, Rétrospective*, L'atelier des Brisants, 2014, repr. p. 28.

Exhibitions

- *Arlette Ginioux, Rétrospective*, Mont-de-Marsan, Despiau-Wlérick museum, August 9, 2014 to February 1, 2015, p. 28.
- *59th Charenton Salon*, Charenton, Espace Art et Liberté, January 19 to February 11, 2012, #9.

"*Arlette Ginioux, you are the most gifted woman that I know, and I'm happy to write you with a declaration of the deepest friendship. I've always taken great pleasure in encountering true talent, and I hope that you haven't yet said all that I hope from you. You are without a doubt the most gifted. Carry on.*"[1]

In 1965, while he was teaching at the Malebranche academy, Charles Auffret (1929-2001) was awarded the Paul Ricard Prize for international sculpture. The prize offered the winner the opportunity to spend a year on the Island of Bendor, off the Mediterranean coast. He moved there with his wife, the sculptor Arlette Ginioux. During their stay there, Ginioux made the acquaintance of

"Gonish", a former legionnaire, and decided to do his bust. Gonish lived in a small hut in the hills of Bandol and worked at a restaurant on the island.

She did a number of studies for the bust, including drawings and engravings, over the several weeks during which he posed. And yet the actual bust was done very quickly, "all by itself," according to Ginioux. The artist was able to do the work so rapidly because she had managed to capture the interior life of her model, which is what she wanted to transmit through her art: "I try to make the soul of the model apparent. Rodin said that to make a bust is the most difficult thing you can do in sculpture. You can't cheat. You have to know how to manage the vocabulary, the abstract language. You have to find the architecture and grasp the model. I seek to share my emotions in a simple language […] I seek to create timeless works. To each their own truth. […] And beauty is found in truth."[2]

From a stylistic point of view, *The Legionnaire* belongs to what one might call "impressionist sculpture," whose first great practitioners at the turn of the 20th century were Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and Medardo Rosso (1858-1928). "Impressionist sculpture," with its extremely precise aesthetic construction, is characterized by a sketchy treatment of the surface, which allows the great human emotions to be conveyed. Arlette Ginioux expressed it thus: "Above all, I'm seeking the grandeur, the right proportions, the architecture. Whether it looks finished or not doesn't matter."[3]

A preparatory drawing of the *Bust of the Legionnaire* is held in a private European collection, as is the bronze proof numbered 1/8.

---

[1] Statement by the sculptor Robert Couturier (1905-2008), September 2003.
[2] Interview with the artist conducted by Marie Flambard, in *Arlette Ginioux, Rétrospective*, exhibition catalogue, Mont-de-Marsan, Despiau-Wlérick museum, August 9, 2014 to February 1, 2015, L'atelier des Brisants, 2014, p. 24.
[3] *Ibid*.