GALERIE MALAQUAIS
sculptures & dessins



CHARLES MALFRAY (1887-1940)

Seated Woman Wiping her Foot

Bronze, n°1/8
Sand cast inscribed Alexis Rudier
Signed: Ch. MALFRAY
H. 51 ; W. 48 ; D. 47 cm

Bibliography

- Jacques de Laprade, *Malfray*, Paris, Fernand Mourlot, 1944, p. 26, pl. XI repr.
- Jean Cassou, Bernard Dorival, Geneviève Homolle, *Catalogue guide du MNAM*, Paris, Editions des Musées Nationaux, 1954, p. 201-202, repr.
- Françoise Galle, *Catalogue raisonné des sculptures de Charles Malfray*, mémoire de DESS, université de Paris I, direction de Robert Julien, 1971, n°80, 81, 82, repr.

Exhibitions

- *Salon d'Automne*, Paris, octobre-novembre 1938, n°962 D.
- *Salon d'Automne*, Paris, 1941, n°2402.
- *Charles Malfray*, Paris, Musée du Petit Palais, juin 1947, n°22 et 23, repr.
- *Charles Malfray 1887-1940*, Paris, galerie Edmond Guérin, 16 février-31mars 1948, n°12, 32.
- *Charles Malfray 1887-1940*, Londres, Marlborough Gallery, septembre-octobre 1951, p. 9, n°4, repr. p. 5.

- *Formes Humaines*, deuxième biennale de sculpture contemporaine, Paris, musée Rodin, 29 avril-30 mai 1966, n°4, repr.
- Paris, galerie Le Chapelin, 2-21 novembre 1977, p. 77.
- *Rodin et la révolution de la sculpture : de Camille Claudel à Giacometti*, Barcelone, Fondation Caixa, 29 octobre 2004-27 février 2005
- *Charles Malfray 1887-1940 sculpteur,* Paris, galerie Malaquais, 5 avril-30 juin 2007.

Public Collections

- Paris, National Museum of Modern Art
- Paris, Museum of Modern Art
- Orléans, Fine Arts Museum

« The main stages in Charles Malfray's career are the *Woman Wiping Herself*, the *Torso*, the *Small Seated Nude*, the *Bather*, the *Source of the Taurion*, the *Awakening* and the 1940 *Reclining Nudes* »[1]. The *Seated Woman Wiping her Foot*thus appears as a major milestone in Malfray's oeuvre: this is evidenced by the presence of the work in several public collections.
It stands between two series: the *Bathers* and the *Swimmers*, and constitutes one of Malfray's few carved attempts at representing a woman in bath time. As Degas had before him, Malfray sought to unveil the intimate moments of life.

"The small 1928 statuette of the *Seated Woman Wiping her Foot* conveys a quite different kind of force. It seems that when he devised this amazingly robust work, with its strongly accorded and balanced contours, he reached both the most fruitful field of his talent and a mastery that would henceforth develop unchecked. […] Two years later however, he would merely enlarge and revise the *Seated Woman*'s torso so as to convert it into a new work, heroically grand. This powerfully vivid piece was justly compared to the *Belvedere Torso* or the *Gaulish Hercules* by Puget"[2].

When it was designed in 1928, the *Seated Woman Wiping her Foot* was only 21 centimeters high. According to René Andréï[3], the executor of Malfray's will, it was enlarged to fifty centimetres by Haligon after the artist's death. However, in the text quoted above, Laprade suggests an enlargement carried out by Malfray himself, in order to achieve the 1930 *Kneeling Torso* (cat. n°15). Malfray made several enlargements of his works: of *Memory* (1923?), of the *Kneeling Torso*(1930), of the *Big Swimmer Torso* ((1936) and of *Summer* (1937). That he should not have enlarged his original work, which only measured more or less twenty centimeters, is quite unlikely. Not only had this artist a strong taste for monumentality, but he also took an interest in the technical issues, that is to say in how craftsmanship could benefit the work. He thus practiced stone cutting, bronze gilding and it seems that he was very much

interested in mechanical enlarging:
“Notes on the artistic qualities of mechanical reproduction
It seems - and it is not a mere impression - that a drawing issued for printing acquires a fixed/definitive quality. It is so to speak made greater […] or rather it is brought back to the “impersonal” greatness that characterizes great things.
An enlarged sculpture is also made “impersonal” by the suppression of its details (modelling details) in which the hand of man still shows.
The machine deprives and “purifies” art of its job-like aspect that recalls the craftsman and in which one senses a “personality” because one “sees” the “job” aspect whence the “work” proceeds.
With a mechanical enlargement, you may behold the statue in its immediacy…” [4].

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[1] 1966, Paris, foreword by Waldemar George.
[2] 1944, Laprade, p. 26-27.
[3] 1971, Galle, n°82.
[4] Manuscript text, Malfray file / Notes on art, Orléans, Documentation Center-library of the Fine Arts Museum.