



ARISTIDE MAILLOL (1861-1944)

Large Kneeling Woman Without Arms

Bronze with brown-green patina

Alexis Rudier foundry sand cast, executed in 1943

Signed (lower right): A. MAILLOL

Numbered (lower right): 3/4

Foundry mark (on back of base): Alexis. Rudier. Fondateur. Paris

H. 84 x W. 41 x D. 54.5 cm

Provenance

- Private American collection

Other cast

- Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) ([inv. M.84.262.2](#))

Selected Bibliography

- 1996 BERGER / ZUTTER: Ursel Berger and Jörg Zutter, eds., *Aristide Maillol*, exhibition catalogue, Berlin, Georg Kolbe Museum, 14 January - 5 May 1996; Lausanne, Musée cantonal des beaux-arts, 15 May - 22 September 1996; Bremen, Gerhard Marcks Museum, 6 October 1996 - 13 January 1997; Mannheim, Städtische Kunsthalle, 25 January - 31 March 1997 [translated from the German by Thomas de Kayser], Paris, Flammarion, Lausanne, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1996, p. 157, no. 50, p.

192 et no. 103, p. 201.

- 2023 FERLIER-BOUAT / LE NORMAND-ROMAIN: Ophélie Ferlier-Bouat and Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, eds., *Maillol*, exhibition catalogue, Paris, Musée d'Orsay, 12 April - 21 August 2022; Zürich, Kunsthaus Zürich, 7 October 2022 - 22 January 2023; Roubaix, La Piscine, Musée d'Art et d'Industrie André-Diligent, 18 February - 21 May 2023, Paris, Musée d'Orsay - Paris, Gallimard, 2022, p. 220-223.

Exhibitions

- 1940 New York, Buchholz Gallery-Curt Valentin, *Aristide Maillol*, January 31st-February 24th, 1940, n°4, NP (another cast).
- 1945 New York, Buchholz Gallery-Curt Valentin, *Aristide Maillol - 1861-1944*, June 6th-30th, 1945, n°29, NP (another cast).
- 1955 New York, Curt Valentin Gallery, *Sculpture - Paintings and Drawings*, June 1955, n°95, NP (another cast).
- 1975 New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *Aristide Maillol 1861-1944*, 1975, n°41, p. 58 (another cast).

This essay is based on the study by Dr. Ursel Berger, in her expertise of October 2018 for the foundry plaster of the *Large Kneeling Woman*:

A Large Sculpture for Kurt von Mutzenbecher

On 21 August 1904, Maillol welcomed his most important patron, Count Harry Kessler (1868-1937), to his studio in Marly-le-Roi for the first time. He was accompanied by his friend Kurt von Mutzenbecher (1866-1938), who was then director of the Wiesbaden Theatre. The two collectors wanted to commission a large-scale sculpture from Maillol. The sculptor was to create his masterpiece, the *Méditerranée*, for Kessler and the *Grande femme à genoux* for Mutzenbecher. This latter sculpture was intended for the music room of Mutzenbecher's house in Wiesbaden.

Maillol executed several sketches for Mutzenbecher without satisfying his patron. Discussions, in which Maurice Denis (1870-1943) and Henry van de Velde (1863-1957) were involved, led to a confrontation between the two men. In the end, Maillol chose to enlarge the statuette of *Femme à genoux (Kneeling Woman)*, a model that had been cast in bronze in an unlimited edition with some success by the art dealer Ambroise Vollard from 1902.

The Music Room Commissioned by Kurt von Mutzenbecher

The music room is a total work of art in which three artists collaborated: Henry van de Velde for the architecture, Maurice Denis for the painting and Maillol for the sculpture. The room was presented in Dresden in 1906 at the Kunstgewerbe-Ausstellung (Exhibition of Applied Arts), which ran from 12 May to the end of October. A photograph of this presentation shows that the

sculpture perched on the chimneypiece was a plaster at the time, as the bronze had not yet been cast (despite the mention of a bronze in the catalogue).

In January 1907, Maurice Denis, accompanied by the writer André Gide (1869-1951), visited Mutzenbecher. Gide was enthusiastic about the bronze of *Grande femme à genoux* and also wanted to commission a large figure from Maillol, but this project never came to fruition. During or after the Second World War, the bronze disappeared: it had probably been stolen. It was the only complete bronze of the *Large Kneeling Woman* cast during Maillol's lifetime.

Large Kneeling Woman Without Arms

During the Second World War, while Maillol was living in the South of France, an edition of the *Grande Femme à genoux sans bras*, consisting of four casts, was produced at the Alexis Rudier foundry in Paris. The four bronzes were cast in 1943 and our example, no. 3/4, was cast on 16 September 1943^[1]. The edition was made from a fragmentary plaster cast.

A 1951 photograph from the Curt Valentin gallery shows one of the bronzes of this edition: as on our bronze, the traces of the arms on the thighs are clearly visible (The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York, Valentin Collection, folder IV.53). Another photograph of *Grande Femme à genoux sans bras* has been documented: it is reproduced in a 2001 Marlborough Gallery catalogue.

^[1] Alexis Rudier foundry ledgers, Rodin Museum Archives: "Chaser: Alliot (78 hours' work), fitter: Hahn (5 hours' work)"