

ARLETTE GINIOUX (1944)

The Athlete

Bronze proof, #1/8
Lost wax cast by Coubertin
Signed: arlette Ginioux
H. 57, W. 21, D. 15.5 cm

Exhibition

- Mont-de-Marsan, Despiau-Wlérick Museum, August 9, 2014 – February 1, 2015, #4

Bibliography

- *Arlette Ginioux Retrospective*, catalogue for the exhibition at the Despiau-Wlérick Museum in Mont-de-Marsan, August 9, 2014 to February 1, 2015, L'atelier des Brisants, 2014, p. 30, repr.

The Athlete is among a half a dozen standing figures that Ginioux created. Each of them has a distinct and well-constructed posture and captures the viewer through its powerful expression. *The Adolescent* (1970) has the feeling of a plant that has grown too fast; *Mauricette* (1971) evokes a sense of Force touched with Despair; *Marie Standing* emanates a feeling of extreme fragility; the body of *Assoumana* radiates humility; *Osiris*, grounded and faithful, can be read as an allegory of peace, and finally, *Eve* (1995) is clearly the guardian of a terrible secret. All of these figures pull the viewer in with the quality of their presence.

The Athlete fits perfectly within this series and its principles: he is standing solidly before us in an attitude both proud and relaxed. His body, though perhaps a bit tired, is nonetheless animated by the raw force that it contains. The sculpture's firm anchor in the ground as well as the impression of power that it conveys to the viewer is reminiscent of *The Storm* (1947) by Germaine Richier (1902-1959).

From a stylistic perspective, *The Athlete* belongs to what might be called "impressionistic sculpture," whose early proponents, at the turn of the 19th to 20th century, were Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and Medardo Rosso (1858-1928). Impressionist sculpture, with its exacting modeling and frequently rough surfaces, is capable of conveying the great human emotions.
All of Arlette Ginioux's standing figures have a highly modeled quality, which leaves the mark of the artist visible. Speaking of this, Ginioux has said: "Above all, I'm seeking the grandeur, the exact relationships, the architecture. Whether or not it seems finished and polished does not concern me."[1] And to cite the art critic Claude Roger-Marx, "Each work of art is first and foremost a portrait of its creator and a revelation of his or her nature."[2]

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[1] Interview with the artist conducted by Marie Flambard in *Arlette Ginioux Retrospective*, catalogue for the exhibition at the Despiau-Wlérick Museum in Mont-de-Marsan, August 9, 2014 to February 1, 2015, L'atelier des Brisants, 2014, p. 24.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 20.