THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO
EXHIBITION OF THE WORKS
OF THE FATHER
CONSTANTIN MEUNIER
PAINTER AND SCULPTOR
CONSTANTIN MEUNIER
BELGIUM, HOLLAND

CATALOGUE OF WORKS
BIOGRAPHY  BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO
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"All I propose to claim at my life's close is the well-filled career of a good workman, and a record of artistic honesty into which I have also put a big share of my heart."

—Constantin Meunier.

CONSTANTIN MEUNIER was born on the morrow of the Belgian revolution at Etterbeek, a suburb of Brussels, April 12, 1831. He was of poor but middle class family, the father being a tax collector, who died shortly after the birth of Constantin. His childhood was an unfair preparation for his destiny, for he was a delicate boy with a large head, and is said to have wept every night until he was fourteen.

The taste for art was introduced to the Meunier home by Calamata, the Director of the Brussels School for Engraving, and the landscape painter, Fournoy, who were tenants in the Meunier house. The older brother, Jean-Baptiste, was a pupil of Calamata, and transmitted all his knowledge of drawing to Constantin. He later had him attend an evening class in modelling. The soul of the young man was awakened to the call of his vocation, and he began drawing with enthusiasm. The boy's proficiency in drawing commended him soon afterwards to the sculptor Fraikin, whose studio he entered in a mixed capacity, as fire-tender, model-moisterener, and incidental modeller. It was little he cared for Fraikin's neo-classic nymphs and goddesses, perceiving, as he did, how easily a plain farm wench, performing an honest physical task, excels all our sham mythologies in truth, energy and real artistic beauty. Nevertheless, Meunier
did not abandon this sphere of sculptural design before he had scored a success with a composition called "The Garland," which he exhibited in 1851.

What he wanted was nature, the live model, not posing. He became a member of the St. Luke Studio, one of the many voluntary associations of artists which subsisted in Brussels at that period. Here Meunier found what he had missed under Fraikin, friends, enthusiasms, and freedom. His painter associates persuaded him that he had missed his right calling, and converted him to painting. In 1857 he exhibited a large canvas, "A Hall in the Hospital of St. Roch," only to destroy it himself as an inadequate expression of his personality. The Belgian government purchased its successor, "A Trappist's Burial," from his exhibit of 1860. It went to the Museum of Courtrai.

Then wedlock, and children, and chronic embarrassment. One manufacturer engaged Meunier to design stained glass. Another employed him to draw Bible scenes to print on colored handkerchiefs.

The monotony of Meunier's laborious existence was broken when the hospitality of some residents of the Liège country acquainted him with the life of Belgium's coal mines and mills. His first contact with it inspired the artist's scene entitled "The Broken Crucible." It was a glimpse of the glass works at Bal-St.-Lambert. He followed it up with "Descent Into a Mine," "Puddler at Rest," (1881), and "Release of the Steel at the Seraing Works" (1882).
AT THE WATERING PLACE
The Belgian government sent him to copy a painting by Mondron Campana at Seville. He returned with his superb "Cigarmaker's Workroom," which is now in the Brussels Museum. Upon his return from Spain, our artist was seized with a fondness for the shipping, the lightermen, and the longshoremen of the port of Antwerp. His vast canvas, "The Wharf," exhibited in 1885, betrays the coming sculptor. Another last journey to "the black country" set his feet firmly in the road which became his path of triumph. Here was a virgin soil in art, to which Meunier's emotion responded. In that somber region, the flares of whose fires has a dim atmosphere to pierce even by day, brusk color contrasts underscore the spare majesty of the human figure in action, the energy of its movements, disclosing the will behind the form, the purpose in the effort, and the poetry of character in a rugged type. Constantin Meunier had left a sculptor's studio to become a painter; he now returned to sculpture with the zest of a painter who has conceived the invention of promoting the iron mill man and the miner to the dignity of portrayal in heroic bronze.

Two sons, lost in swift succession, only deepened Meunier's absorption in his art, and the humanity, the sad sincerity of his subject material. The series of his sculptured works opens with "The Hammerer," his "Puddler at Rest," the group, "Fireman," his monument to Father Damien, the apostle of the lepers, "The Sower," "The Longshoreman." He presently added his "Ecce Homo," his "Prodigal Son," and a "Watering Trough," and a chain of other splendid embodiments of the labor.
idea that were to be crowned by that stunning “Monument to the Glory of Labor.” The master modeled the proud nine-foot statue of “The Sower,” which surmounts this construction, on a colossal scale, during the last months of his life, as if he were flinging a defiance to the grip of old age upon his faculties. His seventy-four years and a cardiac asthma halted his step at each landing of his staircase at that period. In his studio, on the contrary, a change came over him. There he recovered the indomitable energy which stiffened his back against his ailment. Here you might see him climb the castled packing cases of his primitive scaffolding to sprinkle the clay on planks six feet from his floor, and to multiply about himself those giant figures that were leaving his hand as finished masterpieces.

Constantin Meunier died suddenly at Ixelles, April 4, 1905. He had spent the whole day, on the very eve of his death, in his studio, modelling a large group which he entitled “Fecundity.” He died at his task like one of the toil-stout working-men whose eternal round of labor it was his joy to celebrate, until you find him fallen asleep across his finished piece.

In spite of the renown he won at Bing’s Exhibition of his works at Paris in 1896, and in spite of all the honors he won, Constantin Meunier preserved an exquisite simplicity of character. No one gave young men a warmer welcome, or more cordial encouragements to timid beginners. It can truly be said of him that his life of labor and of kindness was no less serene and beautiful than his art.
WORKS IN PLASTER.

1. "Constantin Meunier." Bust.
   Constantin Meunier.

2. Industry—in the glass factory Relief.
   Industrie.

3. The Harvest Relief.
   La Moisson.

4. The wharf. Relief.
   Le Port.

5. The mine. Relief.
   La Mine.

   Un Marteleur.

7. Sower. Statue.
   Un Semeur.

   Débardeur.

   June—Faucheur au Repos.

(Numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5 are part of the frieze for the Monument to Labor.)
WORKS IN BRONZE.

10.
Emile Cottet.
Buste Emile Cottet.

11.
The Prodigal Son.
L'Enfant Prodigue.

12.
"Maternity."
Maternite.

13.
Grief.
Douleur.

14.
A Lighterman, Antwerp.
Delerdue d'Anvers.

15.
Industry.
Industrie.

16.
Head of Christ.
Tete de Christ.
17.  
**Crucified.**  
Suvplicie.  

18.  
**Antwerp.**  
Anvers.  

19.  
"June."  
Juin.  

20.  
**A woman of the people.**  
Femme du peuple.  

21.  
**A daughter of the people.**  
Fille du peuple.  

22.  
**Head of a colliery girl.**  
Tête de Hérihense.  

23.  
**An old miner.**  
Vieux Mineur.  

24.  
**Miner with an ax.**  
Mineur à la Pache.  

25.  
**A puddler.**  
Buste de puddlier.
26.
Youth, Bust
Adolescent.

7.
Ecce Homo, Statuette.

28.
Christ at the tomb, Group
Christ au Tombeau.

29.
The Prodigal Son, Statuette
L'enfant Prodigue.

30.
Head of a child, Bust
Tete d'enfant.

31.
Germaine, the artist's granddaughter, Bust
Tete d'enfant.

32.
Industry, Relief
Industrie.

33.
The harvest, Relief
La Moisson.

34.
The wharf, Relief
Le Port.
35. The return from the mine. Retour de la Mine.

36. The toilers of the sea. Les Travaillleurs de la Mer.

37. Leaving the shaft Remonte des Mineurs.

38. Puddlers at the iron furnace. Puddleurs Sortant la Loupe.


40. Tillers of the soil. La Glèbe.

41. The setting sun. Soleil Couchant.

42. Puddlers. Profils de Puddleurs.

44. Woman and child. Statuette.
    Femme et l'enfant.

    Femme Allaitant son Enfant.

46. **Fire-damp.** Group.
    Le Grison.

47. Old mine horse. Statuette.
    Vieux Cheval de Mine.

48. **The watering place.** Statuette.
    L'abreuvoir.

49. The boat hauler, Katwyk. Statuette.
    Le Haleur de Katwyk.

    Pecheur de Crevettes á Cheval.

51. The miner. Statuette.
    Grand Mineur.

52. Miner working a vein. Relief.
    Mineur á la Veine.
53.
Miner with an ax.
Minier à la Hache.
Statuette.

54.
Miner with a lantern.
Minier à la Lanterne.
Statuette.

55.
A miner crouching.
Minier Accroupi.
Statuette.

56.
A colliery girl calling.
Hierchense Appelant.
Statuette.

57.
A colliery girl with shovel.
Houillense à la Pelle.
Statuette.

58.
A puddler resting.
Puddleur en Repos.
Statuette.

58.
A man drinking.
L'homme qui Boit.
Statuette.

60.
A blacksmith seated.
Fongeron assis.
Statuette.

61.
The hammer-man.
Le Marteleur.
Statuette.
   Le Démouleur de Lingots.

63. The wounded man. Statuette.
   Le Blessé.

64. An ancestor. Statuette.
   L' Ancêtre.

65. The glass blower. Statuette.
   Le Souffleur de Verre.

66. The glassworker. Statuette.
   Le Verrier.

   Le Carrier.

68. The stone-cutter. Statuette.
   Le Tailleur de Pierre.

69. The woodcutter. Statuette.
   Le Bucheron.

70. Ship-wrecked. Statuette.
   Le naufragé.
Le Pêcheur Ostendais.

72. The porter. Statuette.
Le Portefaix.

73. The deckhand. Statuette.
Le Débardeur.

74. The ploughman. Statuette.
Le Laboureur.

75. In the wheatfield. Statuette.
Dans le blés.

76. The harvester. Statuette.
Le Moissonneur.

Juin, Faneur au Repos.

78. The sower. Statuette.
Un Semeur.

79. The mower. Statuette.
Le Faneur.
80.
The feller of wood. Statuette.
L’abatteur.

81.
The philosopher. Statuette.
Le Philosophe.

82.
Workman resting. Statuette.
Travailleur au Repos.

83.
In despair. Statuette.
Le Désespéré.

84.
The old woodcutter’s wife. Statuette.
La vieille Bûcheronnière.

85.
Ghislaine, the artist’s grandchild. Bust.
Tête d’enfant.

86.
Eugène Ysaye. Relief.

87.
The hammer-man. Statuette.
Le Marteleur.
PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS.

88.
Women chatting.
Femmes Faisant la Cauette.

89.
The return of the miners.
Retour des Mineurs.

90.
A miner of Liège.
Mineur Liégeois.

91.
A pitman.
Mineur Borain.

92.
A colliery girl with shovel.
Houillère à la Pelle.

93.
Dump-cars.
Les Wagonnets.

94.
Red roofs.
Les Toits Rouges.

95.
A pitman crouching before his cottage.
Borin Accroupi devant sa Demeur.
96.
Coal mine in snow.
Charbonnage par la Neige.

97.
A boat at the wharf, Rumpelmonde.
Bateau à Quai, Rumpelmonde

98.
Marine.
Marine.

99.
A boat in the channel, Nieuport.
Bateau dans le Chenel, Nieuport.

100.
The boat-haulers.
Les Haleur.

101.
A colliery girl.
Tete de Hiereuse.

102.
Puddlers at the furnace.
Puddleurs Sortant la Loupe.

103.
Heads of puddlers.
Tetes de Puddleurs.

104.
Miner with a pick.
Mineur a la Pique.
105.
Old forge of Champeau
Vielle Forge de Champeau.

106.
An abandoned coal mine.
Charbonnage Abandonné.

107.
Furnaces.
Les Fourneaux.

108.
Brickmakers drawing water.
Briqueteries (de Puits).

109.
Brickyards at dawn.
Briqueteries à l'aube.

110.
Head of Christ.
Tête de Christ.

111.
The stray boat.
L'épave.

112.
Colliery girls.
Les Hierchenses.

113.
Corner in a steel mill.
Coin de Fabrique d'acier.
114.
The shaft head.
La Recette.

115.
Miner leaving the shaft head.
Mineur Quittant la Recette.

116.
Brickyards.
Briqueteries.

117.
The dump.
Le Terril.

118.
The smoke stack.
La Cheminée.

119.
Ponts de Londres.

120.
Bridges, London, No. 2.
Ponts de Londres.

121.
Bridges, London, No. 3.
Ponts de Londres.

122.
Bridges, London, No. 4.
Ponts de Londres.
123.
Return of the miners.
Retour des Mineurs.

124.
Miner of the St. Lambert valley.
Mineur du val St. Lambert.

125.
Fire-damp.
Le Grison.

126.
An urchin
Gamin.

127.
Puddler at work.
Puddleur au Travaill.

128.
A muleteer, Seville.
Muletier à Séville.

129.
A workman.
Ouvrier d'usine.

130.
Page from a sketch-book.
Page d'Album.

131.
Page from a sketch-book.
Page d'Album.
132. A blast-furnace man.
Ouvrier de la Fait Fourneau.

133. Collier smoking his pipe.
Hommeur Fumant sa Pipe.

134. A lighter man walking
Débardeur en Marche.

135. A miner crouching
Mineur Accroupi.

136. A Boulogne fisherman.
Pêcheur Boulognois.

137. A pitman with a pick.
Bœuf à la Pique.

138. A colliery girl.
Hierchése.

139. Head of an old fisherman.
Tête de Vieux Pêcheur.

140. A fisherman of Ostend.
Pêcheur Ostendaîs.
141.
The young glassmaker.
Le Verrier (gamin).

142.
A shrimp-fisher on horseback.
Preneur de Crevettes à Cheval.

143
2nd Study for "Fecundity."
2ème étude pour la Fécondité.

144.
4th Study for "Fecundity."
4ème étude pour la Fécondité.

145.
"La Tonina lighting up the scene of murder, from
Le Mort.
Le Mort—"La Tonina éclairant la scène du meurtre."

146.
"... and the feet were always visible."
Le Mort—"et les pieds se montraient toujours."

147.
"The corpse had changed its place," from
Le Mort.
Le Mort—"Le cadavre s'était déplacé."
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