



RECENT SCULPTURES BY
CARL MILLES

JUNE 5 • SEPTEMBER 28 • 1941

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

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Acknowledgments

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A particular debt is owing to Mr. Robert Allerton and Mr. Samuel A. Marx for their aid as guarantors and to other friends of the Institute who have helped in a like manner.

In preparing this exhibition considerable advantage has been taken of the work done by The Baltimore Museum of Art in organizing the major part of the material for showing in its own galleries and later in The Institute of Modern Art, Boston. To the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, the Institute is indebted for the preparation of most of the photographic material. The illustrations and certain quotations in the catalogue have been made available through the courtesy of the Yale University Press.

For their generous cooperation in many directions, the Institute is grateful to Mr. Milles himself and to his business representative, Mr. Tage Palm of New York.

Foreword

Though this is the first major exhibition of the work of Carl Milles to be shown in Chicago, the sculptor made in fact his American debut here in 1930 with the Diana Fountain in the Michigan Square Building, followed a year later by the Triton Fountain in the Institute itself. It is, therefore, particularly appropriate that the tenth anniversary of the sculptor's settlement in this country be marked by an exhibition which features his works during this last decade, a period that has seen him become a major force in American art.

European artists of the highest international standing have frequently visited this country and worked for a brief period, but Milles is the first foreign born artist of pre-eminent importance actually to make this country his permanent home and become an integral part of its creative expression. This fact is of the greatest significance as the first instance of the reversal of a trend which has maintained since the beginnings of our artistic history. The names of Whistler and Sargent immediately come to mind as examples of the transplanting of American born artists to Europe. Such has been the continuous tendency until the present European cataclysm reversed the current by extraneous force. Milles' migration, however, took place long before this, coming as the result of individual choice rather than political compulsion. It is extremely significant that an artist of international note, eminently successful in his own country, chose to break the environment and continuity of a lifetime in order to take advantage of the greater opportunities for the full development of his ideas which he felt existed on this side of the Atlantic. To Milles, as to the humblest immigrant, America was the land of opportunity.

The monumental sculptor unlike the painter is subject from the very nature of his material to geographic limitations. He must live and work within reasonable distance of the ultimate destination of his product. Work in America meant life in America. Only a brief period of experiment made this clear. This compulsion, in spite of all the personal discomfort and readjustment it entailed, turned out to be a blessing for by it Milles was brought into intimate contact with the inner opportunities which the change presented under the guise of necessity—those of making the spirit, the real life, of America his own.

Considering all the difficulties involved, the rapidity with which Milles has accomplished this union is indicative not only of his own depth and power of understanding, but a revelation of the forces that exist in and with us, forces of which the native American is less conscious than the foreign born conditioned by another environment. Had the sculptor been less mature as an artist, his style less formed when he came into touch with these forces, the results would probably have become apparent in a change of style, a sort of Americanization in quality of form, so to speak. But little or no stylistic change is to be

marked in the works of these last years. Indeed, they reflect the sculptor's response to these American forces simply by a marked change in amplitude, a more daring and unconventional approach to his problems and a more whimsical twist to his humor.

Quite aside, then, from Milles' contribution to the art of sculpture in general, his later work is notable evidence that American soil is far from being esthetically infertile. This soil offers not merely material opportunity, but a creative stimulus that has enabled genius to come some steps nearer to its fulfillment. The creations of these last few years are as legitimately American as they are Swedish in their origin. Without losing its unique personal savor, Milles' work has become a symbol of the strength and richness that can result from the mingling of the Scandinavian genius with the more expansive spirit of the West.

Sufficient has already been written about the why and wherefore of Milles' art to make any lengthy analysis here unnecessary. However, the following notes may be of further help.

Milles is primarily a monumental designer, creating his forms to be seen in the searching light of the outdoors. Consequently generalization and simplification are in order.

His aim is to make his statements with a power and a vitality in musical rhythm rather than any psychological nuance.

Milles' work has always been admired as decorative, which is a mistaken tribute to its architecture and soundly integrated structure.

The following quotations* will sum up a few of the sculptor's salient qualities:

"One important clue to the basic quality of Milles' work can be found in his strong love of life and his equally profound humanity. In the first he is a true son of the North, for where nature makes life a struggle it tends to enhance its conscious value. In his work and his personality equally there is no taking life for granted and little of that placid lyricism by which the southern temperament expresses a somewhat passive pleasure in nature's bounties. His joyous assertion of the value and freedom of life contains something almost stern, a hint of the effort by which it is maintained and a feeling of the positive forces of which it is the expression and culmination. . ."

"... His acute sense of the unity of all things in nature is probably one of the factors that permit the unusually free flow of Milles' imagination. With him there is apparently no thing or idea that cannot find its sculptural equivalent or visual symbol, not by an intellectualized allegory but simply and directly by an almost childlike process of image-making. This innocence of vision gives a freshness of concept and of execution beyond the reach of the lesser artist. . ."

"The beneficial or positive effects of his long craft training are obvious . . . It brought

to the fore and crystallized what has already been indicated as his heritage of racial aptitudes and laid the foundation for a technical mastery which became a commonplace so early in his career that there has never been any temptation on his part to exalt it to a place of undue importance in his work . . . His thorough mastery of anatomy—of organic structure—made possible an early freedom from the limitations of the individual model and allowed full play to his inner eye. . . Milles' technical proficiency has undoubtedly been of the greatest assistance in enabling him to profit from the lessons of the past. . . There is no doubt that in working out of the Rodinesque manner he studied and made use of the medieval and classic styles and was profoundly influenced by both Renaissance and Baroque forms. . . Technically self-sufficient, Milles had no interest in. . . surface restatements but was driven by his curiosity and admiration to penetrate the spirit animating these masterpieces of the past, to discover the secrets of their formal structure, and to use these discoveries in re-creation according to the needs of his own personal vision."

" . . . Through the richness of his creative personality and the sureness of his instinct he made himself in a sense the heir of the ages. In this he has found an effective substitute for the support of a living and generally accepted tradition such as guided the hands of the masters of the past and both fortified and disciplined their imaginations."

" . . . While creative genius always transcends the limitations of race and nationality, its roots must tap the deep levels of human need and experience that are expressed in a common tradition. This is one of the most important clues to an estimate of the sculptor's work and its significance. As soon as we look at it in the light of this relationship we can more easily understand its isolation from academic tradition and from so much of current fashion in the arts of form. We can understand its unique combination of medieval and classic elements and its consistent refusal to adapt itself to stylistic classification according to accepted criteria. We see that, individual and personal as his language may be, through him speaks the soul of a people."

MEYRIC R. ROGERS

Curator of Decorative Arts and Curator of Industrial Arts

**Carl Milles* by Meyric R. Rogers, Yale University Press, 1940.

Chronology

- 1875, June 23 Carl Milles (Carl Emil Vilhelm Anderson) born at Örby in Lagga near Upsala, the eldest son and second child of Lieutenant Emil ('Mille') Anderson and his wife, Valborg Tissel.
- 1885-92 Attended the Jacobsskola, Stockholm. Lived in a boarding house, returning to his family only in vacation time. Avoided school whenever possible to spend time among the sailors and shipping along the water front.
- 1892-97 Left school and was apprenticed to cabinet-maker and woodworker. Attended evening classes in the Technical School in woodwork and later in carving and modeling.
- 1897 At end of year and a half of full-time study in the higher grades of the Technical School was awarded prize of two hundred kroner given by Swedish Society of Arts and Crafts. Accepted invitation to go to Santiago, Chile, to assist in management of school of Swedish gymnastics. Arrived in Paris en route to Marseilles to sail for South America.
- 1897-1904 Remained in Paris. Years of privation, supporting himself by work with cabinet-makers and ornament molders, while continuing to study and model independently in spare time.
- 1899 Work admitted to the Salon for first time.
- 1902 Awarded fourth place in competition for Sten Sture monument in Upsala. Award later changed to first place on demand of student body. Reputation immediately established in Sweden, but disagreements and lack of funds delayed completion of monument until 1925.
- 1903 Traveled in Holland and Belgium.
- 1904 Left Paris for Munich.
- 1905 Married Olga Granner, painter, of Gratz, Austria.
- 1906-8 Period of severe physical distress. First visit to Rome during intermediate convalescence. Returned to Stockholm for about a year but again obliged to recuperate in Austria and Lake Garda for winter of 1907-8.
- 1908 Though not fully recovered, obliged to resume work and returned to Stockholm. Began to build villa at Herserud, Lidingö, near Stockholm, and period of intense work under handicaps of poverty and ill health.
- 1914 Exhibition of Milles' recent works at the Baltic Exposition in Malmö attracted wide acclaim and recognition by continental critics. Interruption of foreign connections by the World War.
- 1917 Discontent with his earlier works and determination to follow a new path impelled Milles to destroy the majority of models in his Lidingö studio. Period of rapid stylistic development.
- 1920 Elected Professor of Modeling in the Royal Academy of Art, Stockholm.
- 1923 New works given prominent place in Tercentenary Exhibition at Göteborg. Completion of first great fountain project at Halmstad.
- 1925 Milles' fiftieth birthday marked by wide acclaim in Swedish press in spite of increasing criticism of his later work.
- 1926-27 Exhibition of Milles' work at the Tate Gallery, London, first showing outside Sweden.
(winter) Contact with English-speaking world.
- 1929 First visit to United States.
- 1931 Accepted invitation to take up residence as Professor of Sculpture at Cranbrook Academy of Art, Michigan; beginning of American period. First comprehensive American showing of Milles' work at City Art Museum of St. Louis followed by exhibitions at Detroit, Cleveland, and Brooklyn.
- 1932 Settled permanently in Cranbrook.
- 1934 Acquisition of collection of Milles' sculpture by Cranbrook Foundation.
- 1935 Honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters conferred by Yale University.
- 1938 Award of gold medals of the American Institute of Architects and the Architectural League of New York.
- 1940 Elected honorary member Royal Academy, London.

Catalogue

Dimensions given are approximate.

1. **THE ASTRONOMER.** 1940. H. with base 7'6". Plaster. Study, reworked, for a colossal figure designed for the New York World's Fair in 1938. It signifies man's awakening to the science of space. *Lent by the sculptor.*
2. **THE ELEPHANT BOY.** 1941. H. 3'10". Plaster. A sketch for a fountain in a zoological garden. *Lent by the sculptor.*
3. **THE WATER GOD AND HIS CHILDREN.** 1935. H. 1'10". Bronze. Sketch for a fountain project connected with the Meeting of the Waters Fountain, St. Louis, Mo. *Lent by the sculptor.*
4. **THE CLOUD AND HIS CHILDREN.** 1941. H. 2'0". Plaster. Preliminary study for a fountain project. *Lent by the sculptor.*
5. **THE RIVER GODDESS.** 1936. H. 2'2". Bronze. A preliminary study for the figure of the Missouri, the Meeting of the Waters Fountain, St. Louis, Mo. *Lent by the sculptor.*
6. **PRELIMINARY STUDIES.** Original plasters and bronze replicas of sketches for (a) The St. Louis Fountain, (b) The "Jonah" Fountain, (c) The Monument to Genius, (d) Wild Boars, Match Company Building, Stockholm, etc. *Lent by the sculptor.*
7. **INDIAN HEAD.** 1936. H. 3'8". Mexican Onyx. Replica in same material of the head of the Great Spirit, the Peace Monument, City Hall, St. Paul, Minn. *Lent by the sculptor.*
8. **RELIEFS FOR A RADIO STATION.** 1936. H. 4'0". Plaster. Models for two granite reliefs installed in Radio Station WWJ, Detroit, Mich. (a) Musicians Broadcasting. (b) The Audience. *Lent by the sculptor.*
9. **THE HORSEMAN.** 1938-40. H. 3'10". Plaster. A preliminary study for the central unit of three reliefs typifying "Nature and Man" executed in wood for the Time and Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York City. *Lent by the sculptor.*
10. **MAN AND UNICORN.** 1938-40. H. 4'0". Wood. A study expressive of the fantasy of nature developed in connection with the "Nature and Man" reliefs. *Lent by the sculptor.*
11. **THE DOORS OF AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY.** 1938. H. 12'0". Plaster. Models for four of a series of six bronze doors installed in the State Finance Building, Harrisburg, Pa. (a), (b) and (c) Agriculture. (d) Industry. *Lent by the sculptor.*
12. **THE MEETING OF THE WATERS.** 1936-40. H. (Main Figure) 9'10". Plaster. Full scale models for the fountain in the Aloe Plaza, St. Louis, Mo. The composition symbolizes the union of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers accompanied by their tributaries. The two groups enlivened by some ninety water jets are installed in a basin 200' long by 35' wide. (See accompanying photographs.) *Lent by the City of St. Louis.*
13. **HEAD OF A GIRL.** 1917. H. 1'1". Silver Pewter. Detail of a group of two dancing girls. *Lent anonymously.*
14. **HEAD OF A GIRL.** 1934. H. 1'3". Silver Pewter. Detail of one of the secondary figures of the Orpheus Fountain, Stockholm. *Lent by Mr. and Mrs. John P. Meyer.*

15. **EMMANUEL SWEDENBORG.** 1930. H. 2'0". Wood. Part of one study for a projected monument to Swedenborg, the religious leader and philosopher. The wood version was developed from an earlier model suitable for bronze casting. *Lent by the Cranbrook Foundation.*
16. **THE IMMIGRANTS.** 1934. L. 6'6". (a) Iron. (b) Plaster. Studies for part of a monument commemorating the cultural contribution of the immigrant. On one side (a) the men, and on the other (b) the women are shown bringing their gifts, each group borne on a fantastic fish. *Lent by the sculptor.*
17. **THE SUN SINGER.** 1926. H. 3'0". Bronze. Torso of small model for the Esaias Tegnér Monument, Stockholm. *Lent by Mr. Charles S. Peterson.*
18. **THE SUNGLITTER.** 1918. H. 2'8". Bronze. Small model of a fountain figure embodying the sparkle and sweep of sunlit waves. *Lent by Mr. Otto C. Doering.*
19. **MONUMENT TO GENIUS.** 1940. H. 6'0". Bronze. Final model developed as a memorial to the actor, Gösta Ekman. It suggests the idea of genius struggling towards its fulfillment even to the moment of death. *Lent by the sculptor.*
20. **EUROPA AND THE BULL.** 1926. H. 2'6". Bronze. Small study for the central group of the Europa Fountain, Halmstad, Sweden. *Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Walter S. Brewster.*
21. **ENGELBREKT.** 1926. H. 4'0". Bronze. Study for a monument commemorating the victory of the Swedish hero and leader, Engelbrekt, over the Danish oppressor in the fifteenth century. *Lent by the Cranbrook Foundation.*
22. **THE YOUNG MOOSE.** 1926. H. 2'8". Bronze. *Lent by Mrs. Clow Laflin.*
23. **ORPHEUS.** 1926-34. H. 7'2". Bronze. Preliminary study for the central figure of the Orpheus Fountain, Stockholm. *Lent by the Yale University Art Gallery.*
24. **EMMANUEL SWEDENBORG.** 1930. H. 2'2". Bronze. Study for an alternate version of the projected monument illustrated in part by Cat. No. 15. Swedenborg is here conceived as reaching above the stars to the mystery of the infinite. *Lent by the Cranbrook Foundation.*
25. **FIGURE OF A GIRL.** 1934. H. 3'6". Bronze. Preliminary study for one of the secondary figures of the Orpheus Fountain. *Lent by the sculptor.*
26. **HORSE'S HEAD.** 1927. H. 3'4". Bronze. Detail of the central group of the Folkunga Fountain, Linköping, Sweden. *Lent by the Cranbrook Foundation.*
27. **ORPHEUS HEAD.** 1936. H. 2'3". Bronze. Detail of central figure of the Orpheus Fountain. *Lent by the sculptor.*
28. **THE BOAR HUNT.** 1938. H. 3'6". Bronze. *Lent by the sculptor.*
29. **MONUMENT TO GENIUS.** 1940. H. 3'0". Bronze. Intermediate study for Cat. No. 19. *Lent by the sculptor.*
30. **FOLKE FILBYTER.** 1927. H. 11'2". Bronze. (Exhibited on the upper terrace of McKinlock Court.) Replica of the central group of the Folkunga Fountain. The horse, man's faithful servant, bears the aged chieftain on his twenty year search for his abducted grandson. *Lent by the sculptor.*

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Head of Girl. 1917. See Cat. No. 13. From bronze replica. Photograph by M. R. Rogers.

PLATE II

Orpheus Head. 1936. See Cat. No. 27. From iron replica. Photograph by M. R. Rogers.

PLATE III

Man and Unicorn. 1938. See Cat. No. 10. From plaster model. Photograph by R. Askew, Cranbrook.

PLATE IV

Monument to Genius. 1940. See Cat. No. 19. From clay model. Photograph by M. R. Rogers.

PLATE V

The Boar Hunt. 1938. See Cat. No. 28. From plaster model. Photograph by R. Askew, Cranbrook.

PLATE VI

Harrisburg Doors, Agriculture II. 1938. See Cat. No. 11. From bronze casting. Photograph by M. R. Rogers.

PLATE VII

Meeting of the Waters Fountain, (St. Louis). 1936-40. See Cat. No. 12. Photograph by Jean Jackson.

PLATE VIII

Triton, Meeting of the Waters Fountain, (St. Louis). 1936-40. See Cat. No. 12. Photograph by Jean Jackson.

PLATE IX

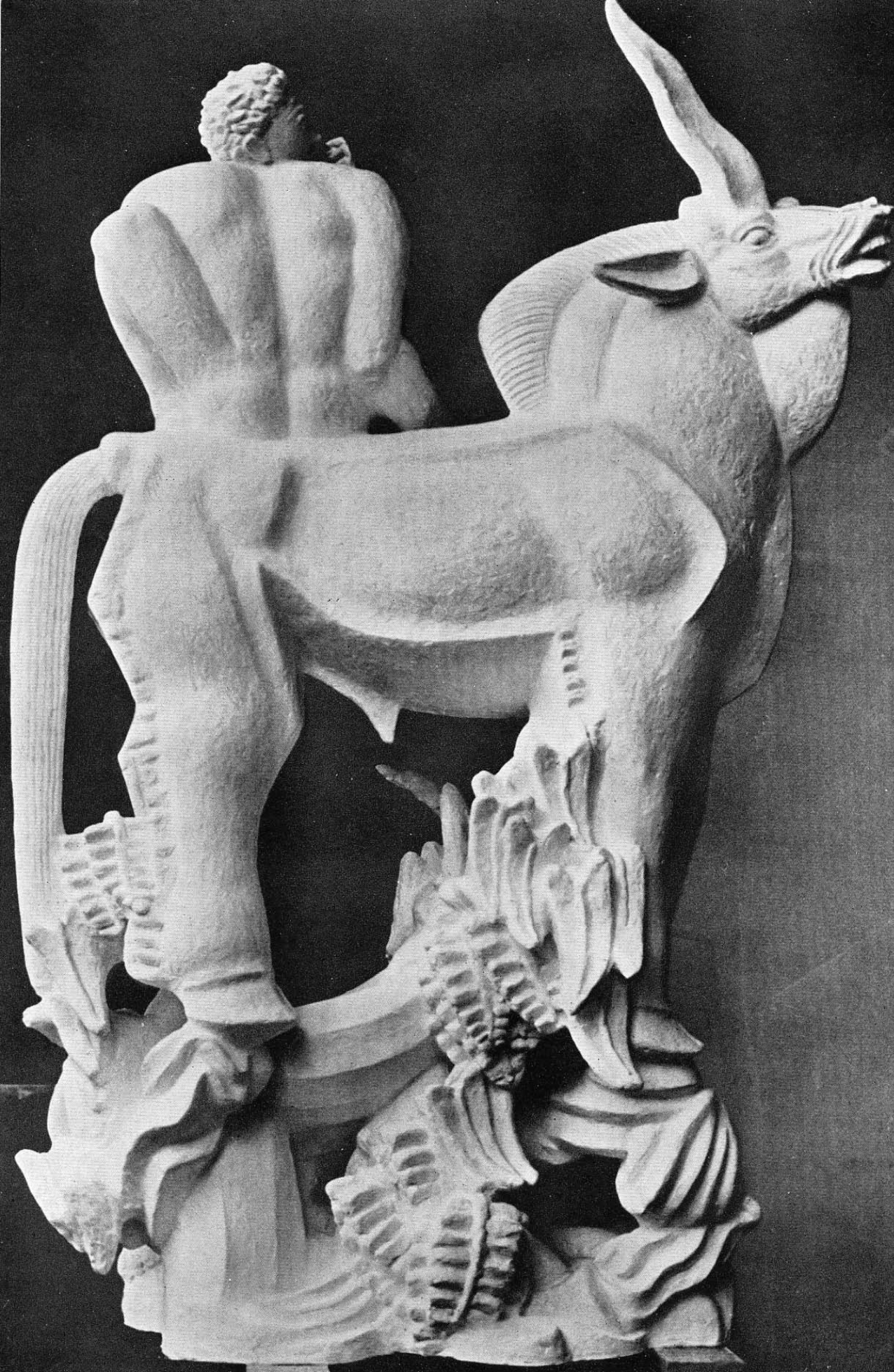
The Astronomer. 1940. See Cat. No. 1. From bronze casting. Photograph by Jean Jackson.

PLATE X

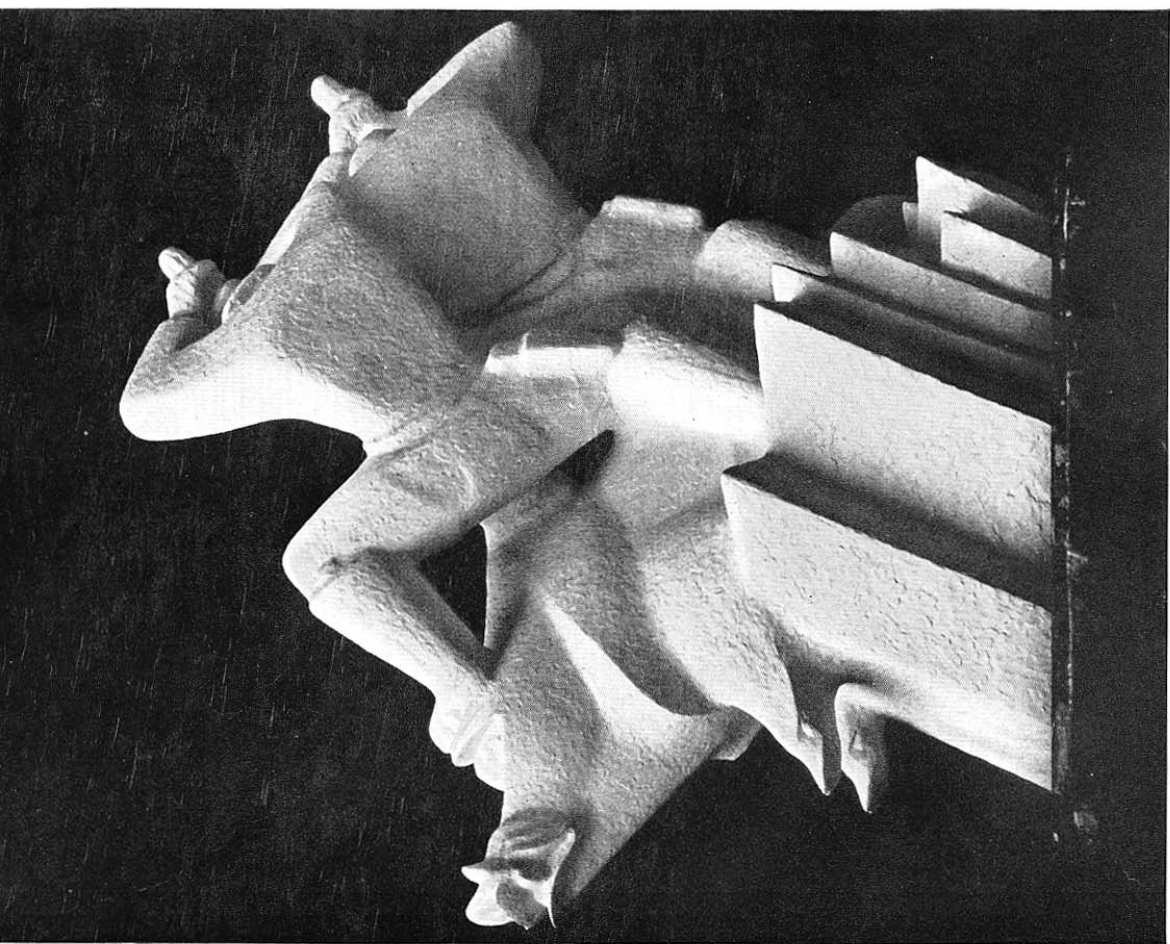
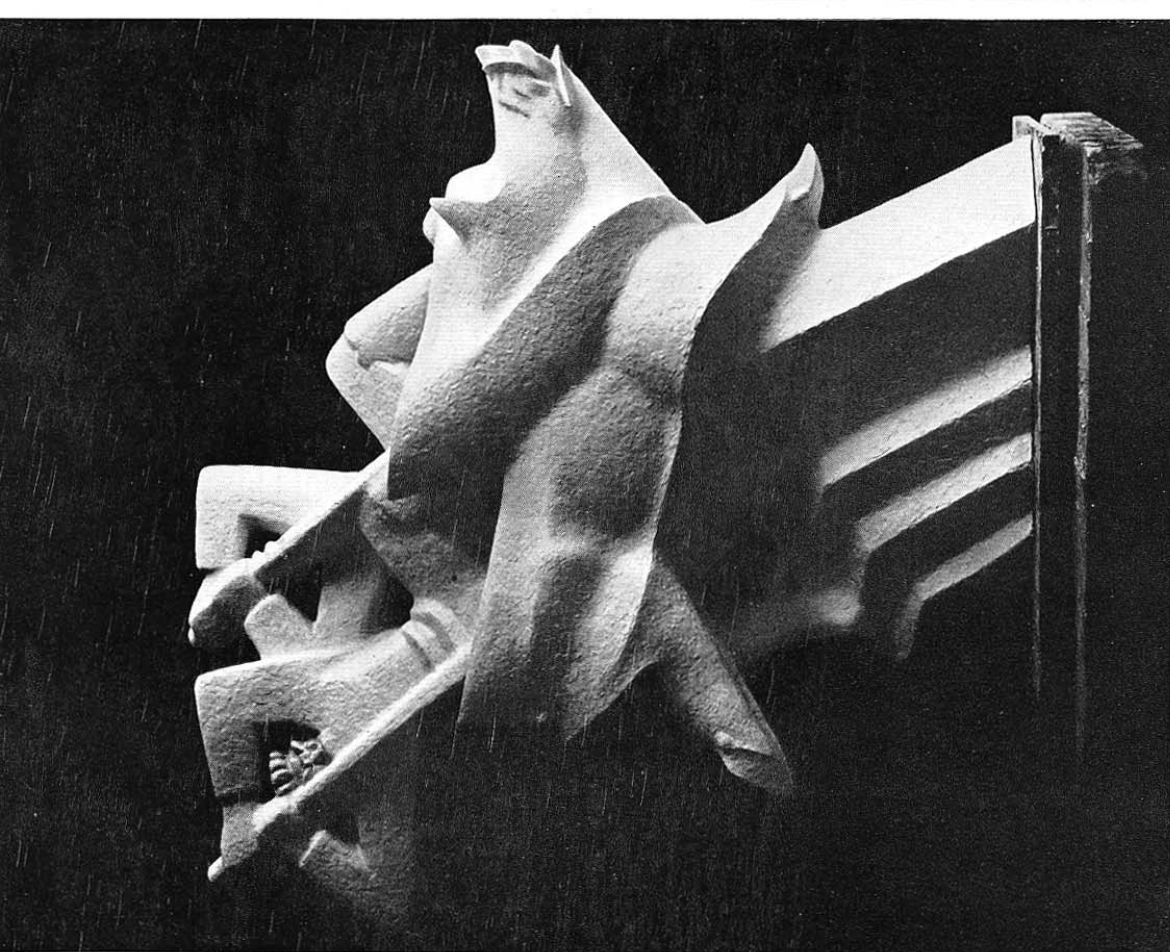
Folke Filbyter. 1927. See Cat. No. 30. From bronze original in Linköping. Photograph by Kaudern, Stockholm.

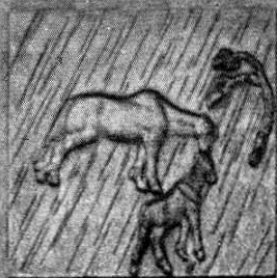








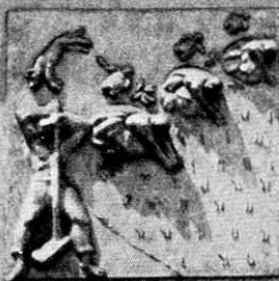




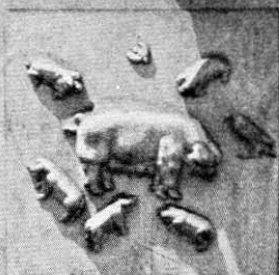
RAIN

SUNNY
ROUTINTHE FARMER PRAYS
FOR GOOD
HARVESTHE IS PLANTING
SEEDLINGSTHE GARDEN
DISTURBED

3PM



1000 HOURS

AND SHE IS
PRAYING TOO

NOON

PLANTING
TUBERS





