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EXHIBITION
OF
SCULPTURE AND DRAWINGS

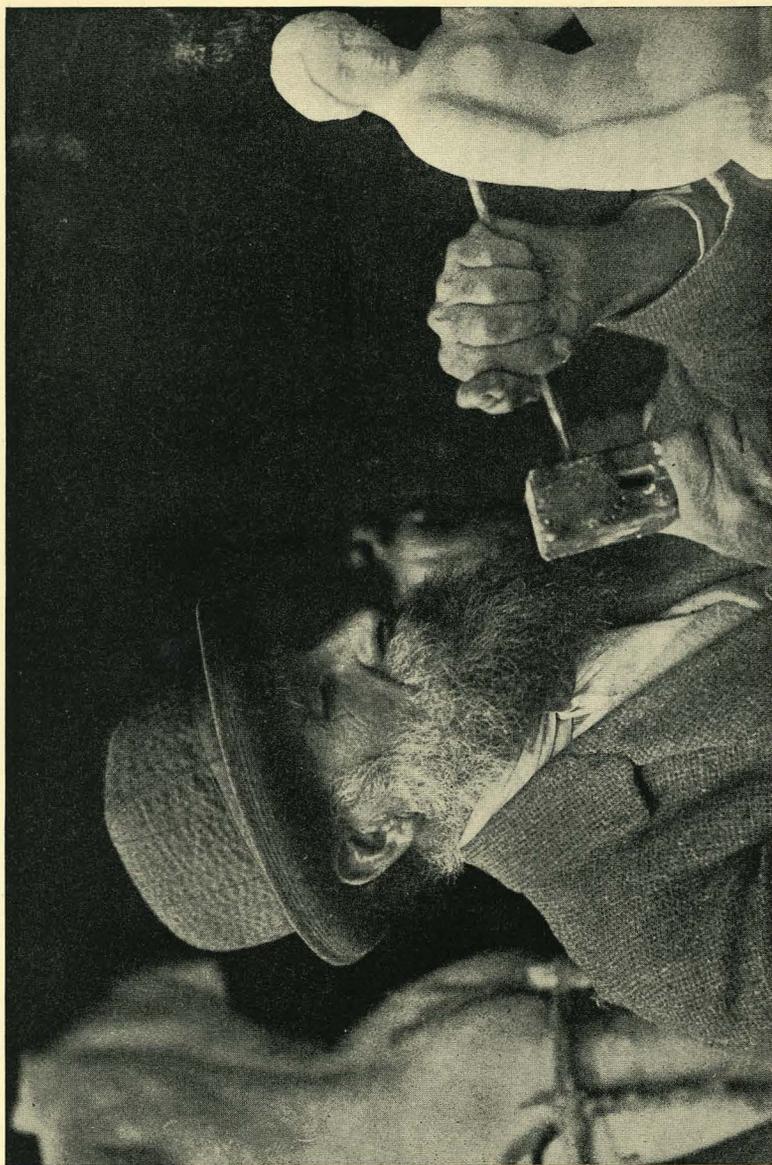
By ARISTIDE MAILLOL

1925 - 1926



SCULPTURE
AND DRAWINGS
BY
ARISTIDE MAILLOL





PORTRAIT OF ARTIST

SCULPTURE AND DRAWINGS

BY
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MAILLOL

1925-1926

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FOREWORD

A Note on Aristide Maillol

"SIMPLIFICATION," once observed a painter of my acquaintance, "is the only liberty an artist can permit himself in the face of Nature." However this may be, without the exercise of this "liberty," he must, I imagine, remain hopelessly baffled by the complexity of the visible world. He can only arrive at self-expression combined with æsthetic truth by a process of selection and elimination, determined equally by the Idea it is his purpose to embody and the nature of the Instruments at his command.

A successful creative work will illustrate a perfect blend of spirit and substance, a fusion of thought and feeling, an identification of subject and object; where no component can obtrude but all by a kind of exquisite "give and take" produce together that mysterious Unity we acclaim as Art.

In the work of M. Maillol we discover a serene and static beauty, an effortless equilibrium which can only result from such an inspired conjunction. By his simplifications, never pushed to the point of cold abstraction, he attains the statuesque without relaxing for a moment his vital grasp on the warm and fecund principle of adolescent Womanhood which seems to be the mainspring of his genius.

No violence, no untoward emphasis can be allowed to ruffle the self-sufficiency of these Forms and though we may divine the passion that underlies their radiant calm, the artist has known how to suppress all but the most lasting curves and masses of a completely innocent immobility.

With all this mastery of the material, we are never

tried by a display of mere dexterity calculated to dazzle the naïf spectator with its unmeaning brilliance. Most surprising of all, this delicate and slightly misanthropic recluse finds, it is said, all the inspiration he needs in a collection of those cheap and equivocal photographs which are sold on the Boulevards under the heading "Pour accoutumer les yeux"!

Though I am not familiar with much of his more recent work, it seems to me that Maillol has not changed in point of view, though he must have gained in power, since first I saw and admired what we used to call his "Tanagra" figures some twenty years ago.

There may be critics who will detect in this unvarying, this almost redundant excellence, a hint of exhaustion, as if even the most perfect form may be too often repeated, till by attrition the life-accent is worn away and at last only an empty mask remains of what we once took to be alive.

The present exhibition should decide how far such a view is justified or on the other hand it may convince us that we can never tire of a style so pure as that of Aristide Maillol, or ever have enough of a vision so truly classic or too much of craftsmanship so consummate as his.

—AUGUSTUS JOHN

INTRODUCTION

ARISTIDE MAILLOL was born December 8th, 1861, in the little village of Banyuls overlooking the Mediterranean. He was one of many children in a poor family which found living difficult. In 1882 he left for Paris, there to study painting in the Ecole des Beaux Arts under Cabanel. He remained for ten years. As a painter he never found himself. Later he became interested in making designs for tapestries, working on them himself, seeking the colors which harmonized best from the flowers and leaves he found during long walks in the country.

The art of sculpture did not come to Maillol until he had reached the age of forty, but the last twenty-five years he has given entirely to work in clay, bronze and stone. In this period he has reached a place which is perhaps the highest in sculpture today. Such at least is the opinion of many of the great sculptors and painters of Europe. Whatever may be the school of these artists, they are united in one thing—in the high value which they place on Maillol's work.

As Bourdelle is the poet of sculpture, Maillol is the priest of beauty. He is not concerned as is Bourdelle in the relation of sculpture to architecture. He has a profound love for the antique but for him barbarism in art does not exist. He ignores death, suffering, restlessness and strives for fullness, placidity and quiet strength. He seldom works from a model but relies on memory, drawings, photographs and depends principally on his knowledge of the perfection of form. Maillol has arrived at this great simplicity of form naturally without effort. He never works without knowing why and he knows where and how to find beauty.

At the early stages of his career when painting was taught him, he felt the futility of schools and academies realizing that only from life and work can knowledge be gained. He is a part of the neo-classic movement which includes Cézanne and Gauguin.

His ideal in art is to condense, to produce simplicity; a noble and quiet certainty which is the mark of Greek art in its best period.

Maillol almost always concentrates on the same thing, even the same figure. When asked if it did not become monotonous, he replied: "What is there more beautiful?" His relation to the Greeks appears not only in his larger works, but in the small terra cotta figures, in which he shows so exquisite a mastery. With them he recreates the charm of the best figures of Tanagara. There is no master today who can compare with him in the handling of this medium, the medium which is perhaps better suited than any other to smaller works of sculpture.

Belonging to the south of France, his boyhood past between the Pyrenees and the Sea, this eager and responsive nature has absorbed the warmth, the calm and generosity of the south where always he returns to pass the winter months. In his art Maillol intends to hide nothing, everything is as he sees it. Every gesture, attitude, the rhythm of the body, all is plainly seen; like his women his art is naked and naive. His ambition is to honestly achieve, to produce a perfect object of art. He takes all the time that is necessary. He has patience. Many of the works of Maillol, though small, are monumental in construction. The certainty and fullness of his forms are never destroyed by exaggeration or insistence on an expression, nor has he ever succumbed to the influence or imitation of others.

He has been not only a painter and a producer of tapestries, but he has been and is today a draughtsman, a master of lithography and engraving. He is an artisan and still makes the paper which he uses for his drawings and etchings. But it is, of course, as a sculptor of works in stone and bronze that Maillol takes his stand among the great artists of the world. Such works as the "Femme Accroupie" shown in the Salon d'Automne of 1905, the "Pomona," the bronze "Torse de Jeune Femme," the bas-relief "Desir," the "Hommage à Cézanne," are among the works upon which his reputation must in the long run depend. Not that Maillol is an artist who has reached his zenith; he is even now completing a work which promises to be his masterpiece and upon which he has been engaged for eleven years.

In one respect Maillol's work is clearly to be distinguished from that of the early Greeks; it has more sensuality, more seduction, his women are the country women of the vineyards of Banyuls, they are of his own race, they are figures of proud strength, full of life and the love of living, without shame and without subterfuge, women with broad thighs and shoulders, soft flanks and firm, full breasts. There is nothing of the goddess in them. Maillol might be called the Swinburne of sculpture.

He works constantly but alone, without pupils or assistants save an artisan or two. Slowly and surely he builds up these forms vibrant with life which he himself loves too much to consider as objects for sale. To him a sale is never a goal, it is a concession.

Maillol is a man of middle height and slender, gray bearded, tanned by the sun and sea breezes. His eyes are blue, narrow-lidded and humorous, with just a hint

of the fox in them, surrounded with a net work of little lines. His movements are very quick and sudden. He speaks with the guttural tongue of the South. His clothes are of rough homespun.

Resting on the side of a hill, overlooking a broad valley, is the studio—small and well hidden behind thick foliage beside a quiet road. Across a narrow lane can be seen the house, within are cool floors, plain walls and simple furniture. Yellow curtains stretch across casement windows, and in the center is a large table littered with many drawings roughly sketched on odd pieces of paper. This bit of world, so inaccessible to the casual visitor, is but a day's pilgrimage from the noise and turmoil of the city. Here alive with enthusiasm, full of energy, Maillol lives ever young with eternal youth.

—ANNA GLENNY DUNBAR

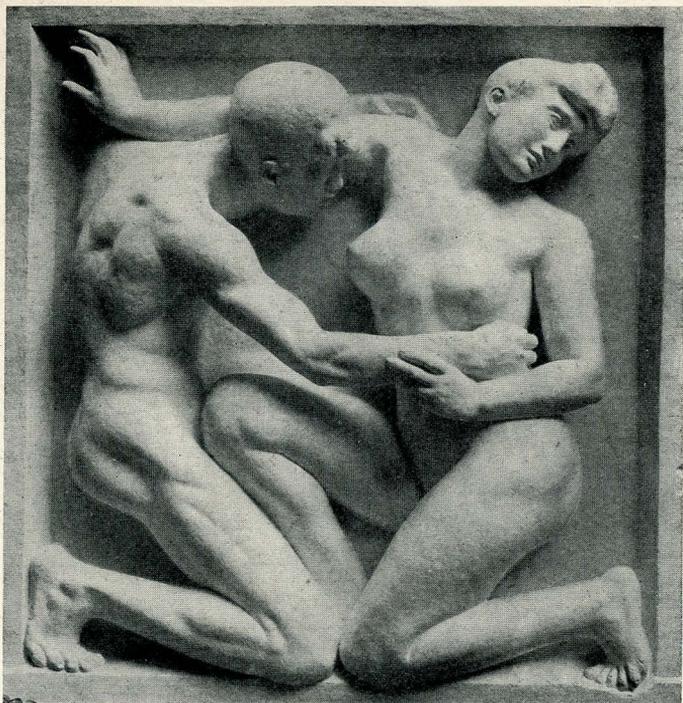
CATALOGUE

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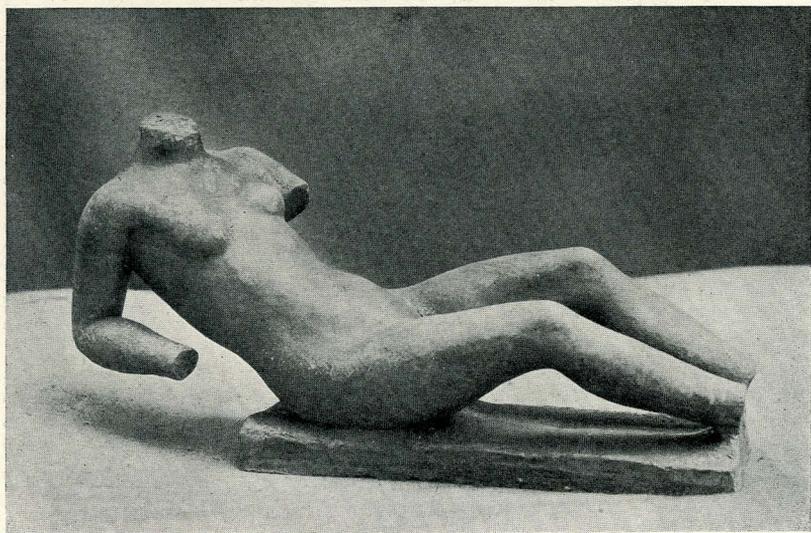
- I TORSO OF YOUNG WOMAN · *Bronze*
- II DESIR · Bas-relief · *Plaster*
- III FRAGMENT FROM THE MONUMENT
“HOMMAGE À CÉZANNE” · *Plaster*
- IV SPRING TIME · *Plaster*
- V SUMMER · *Plaster*
- VI TORSO (unfinished) · *Plaster*
- VII DRAPED FIGURE · *Plaster*
- VIII DRAPED FIGURE · *Plaster*
- IX NUDE · *Plaster*
- X WOMAN'S HEAD · *Plaster*
- XI WOMAN'S HEAD · *Plaster*
- XII WOMAN CROUCHING · *Bronze*
- XIII WOMAN KNEELING · *Bronze*
- XIV WOMAN STANDING · *Bronze*
- XV WOMAN SEATED · *Bronze*
- XVI RECLINING FIGURE · *Bronze*
- XVII RECLINING FIGURE · Fragment · *Terra cotta*
- XVIII TORSO OF WOMAN · Fragment · *Terra cotta*
- XIX GROUP OF DRAWINGS



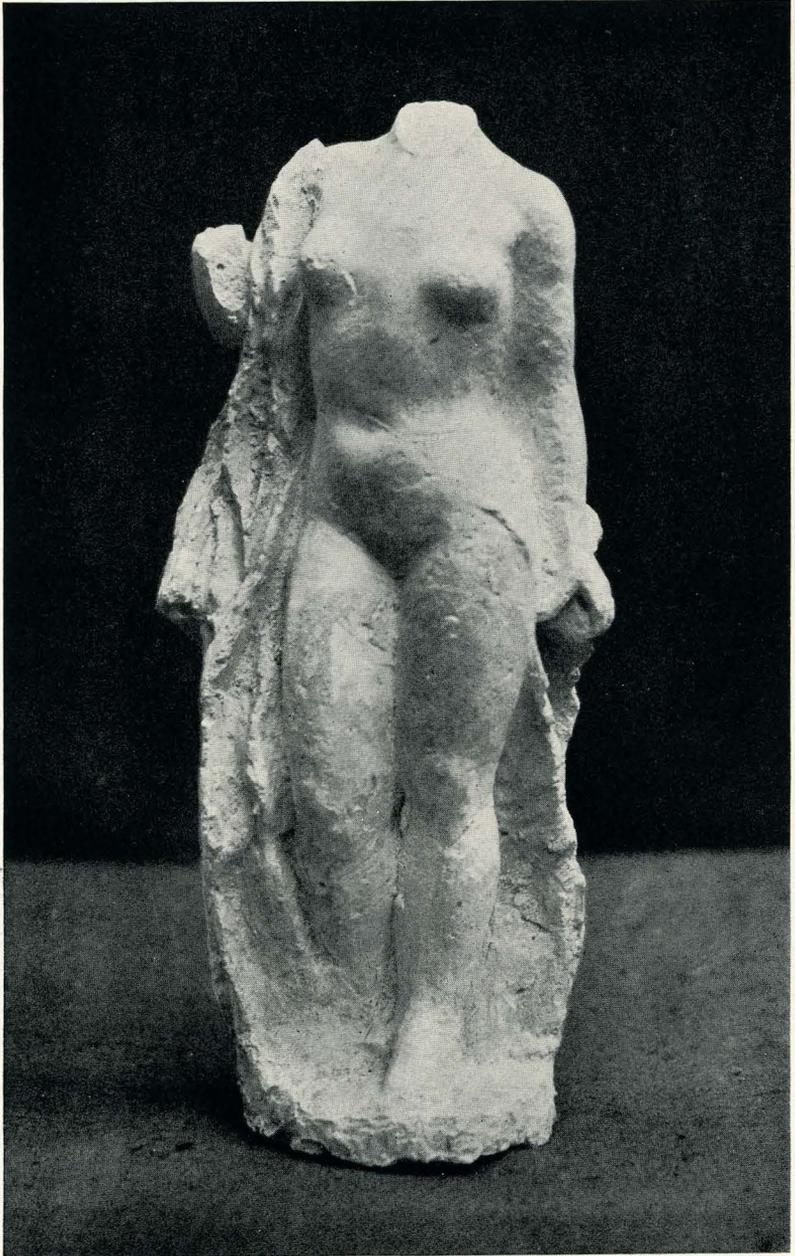
TORSO OF YOUNG WOMAN



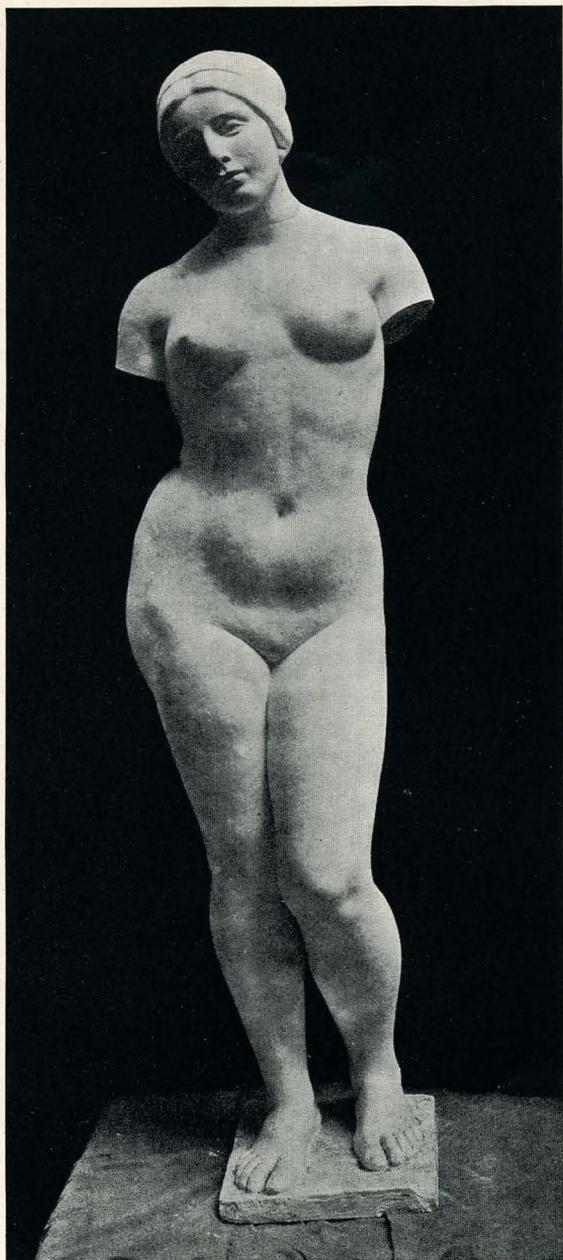
DESIR



RECLINING FIGURE, FRAGMENT



DRAPED FIGURE



SUMMER



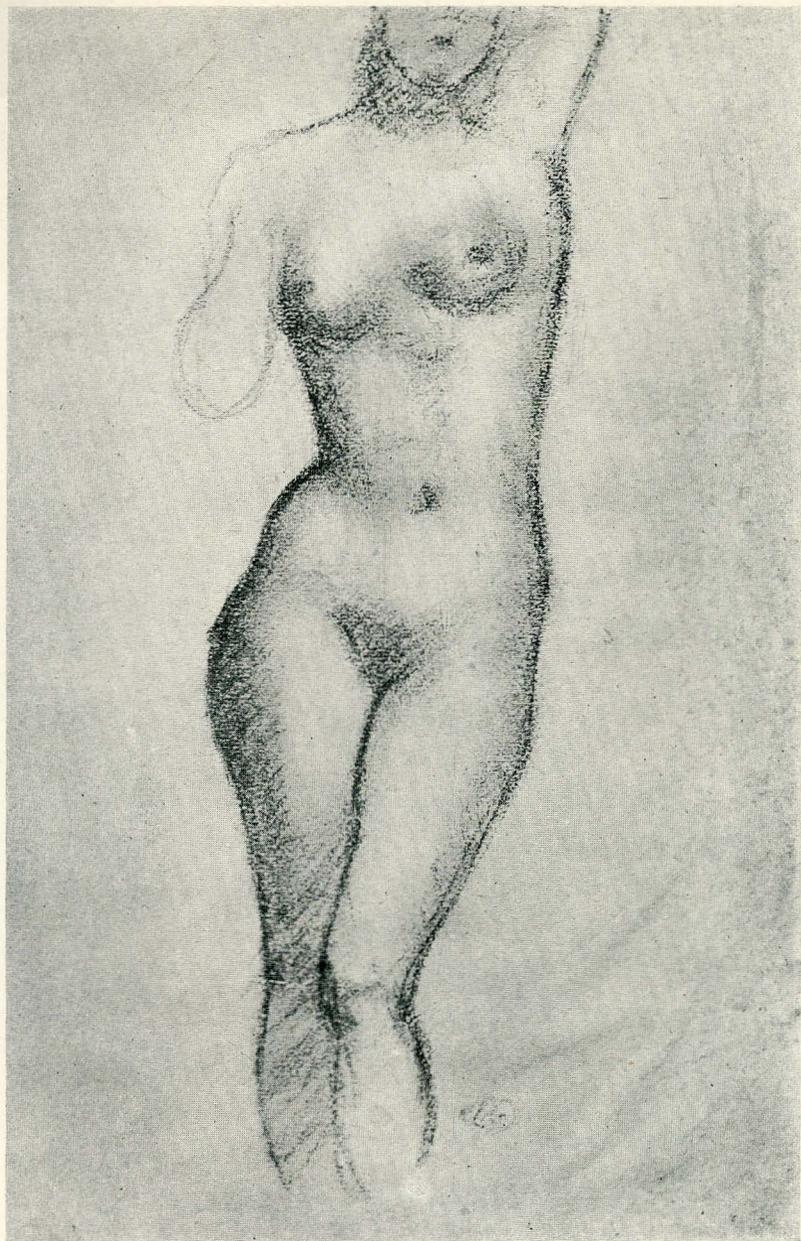
WOMAN CROUCHING



DRAPED FIGURE



DRAWING



DRAWING



WOMAN'S HEAD



NUDE

THE
MATTHEW'S BROTHERHOOD
WORKS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

