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Museum of New Mexico
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

EXHIBITION OF SCULPTURE

EUGENIE F. SHONNARD

128 '60

ART MUSEUM
SCHOOL OF AMERICAN RESEARCH
MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO
SANTA FE, N. M.

December 4, 1927, to January 5, 1928



CHIEF CHIYESA COMMUNING WITH THE GREAT SPIRIT
By Eugenie F. Shonnard

CATALOGUE

OF AN

Exhibition of Sculpture

BY

EUGENIE F. SHONNARD



PUEBLO MOTHER AND CHILD
By Eugenie F. Shonnard

EUGENIE F. SHONNARD

"The way of sculpture is long and most sculptors achieve their real expression late in life. What is done by the way is always a work of promise rather than fulfilment." Thus writes an eastern critic, and if that is true, then we must look forward to achievements by Miss Shonnard which will equal, if not excel, the masterpieces of all times. A view of the sixty or more examples of her art in the present exhibit will reveal work worthy to be placed beside that of a St. Gaudens or a French, if not of a Rodin or a Bourdelle. Here we find not only an eclectic classicism that has its roots in the greatest period of Egyptian masters and of Hellenistic prime but also the spirit of Modernism that seeks to express spirit through form. In fact, the feeling of Miss Shonnard for form is astounding, her sensing of character must be intuitive for one so young—to others it comes only after the ripe experience of life and living. Art is deemed international, universal, but its expression is largely that of race influenced by environment, and here too, Miss Shonnard, proves an adaptability, which bridges the gap between Breton and Pueblo, which presents animal life as convincingly as it does a human portrait. With the sensitive touch of

a woman and the strength and vigor that one ascribes only to the masculine, Miss Shonnard has psychological insight and the subtlety of mysticism. A rare combination indeed, and the wonder grows as one converses with this soft-spoken, retiring young woman of American birth and nurture.

Eugenie F. Shonnard was born in Yonkers, New York, the daughter of Major Frederic Shonnard, Major in the Volunteer 6th New York Artillery during the Civil War. He took part in many sanguinary engagements and was a member of the Loyal Legion. His portrait and war mementoes in the Shonnard home in Santa Fe testify to a noble character and lofty idealism. The mother of Miss Shonnard, is a constant companion and inspiration to her daughter, and is a great-grand daughter of Francis Lewis, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Miss Shonnard made an auspicious start in her artistic career by studying Decorative Art under Alphonse Mucha, but soon turned to Plastic Art, having discovered that her forte was the creation of figures from life. After the death of her father, she accompanied her mother to Paris and there had the advantage of criticism from Emile Bourdelle and August Rodin. The recognition she had won in New York was repeated in Paris, where her exhibits were given favorable comment by critics writing for the best-

known journals of that world center of art. Letters from Marshall Joffre, the patronage of Ambassador Myron Herrick, invitations to exhibit by art galleries and museums, attest to the favor she found among the elect. She became an Associate Member of the Salon Nationale des Beaux Arts in Paris; Member of the Salon d'Automne of Paris; Member of the National Sculptors Society of America. The French Government bought one of her bronze animal figures for the Luxembourg. The Metropolitan Museum of New York has a bronze cast of "La Grand-mere" and the Cleveland Museum owns several of her bronzes.

Miss Shonnard's art not only has a wide sweep of theme and race but has also mastered a variety of material. Granite as well as marble, bronze as well as hard woods, native stone as well as clay, yield before the master touch of her fingers and become objects of beauty and joy. The hardest and most refractory material before her magic blossoms into marvelous characterizations. That Miss Shonnard after her triumphs in Paris and New York should select Santa Fe as her home and workshop is significant. Here her mother has bought a residence on a quiet street aloof from artist colonies and throngs of humanity. The house has been remodeled into a mansion of refinement and artistic ensemble. In the spacious garden, Miss Shonnard has built her-

self a studio where she works on commissions that have come to her even in this remote part of the world and there she creates into semblance of life the Pueblo character which has impressed her so much that she decided to reside in the Southwest. How well she has succeeded may be gauged from the following letter of the Director of the School of American Research and Museum of New Mexico written two years ago, after Miss Shonnard's first summer in Santa Fe:

My Dear Miss Shonnard:

I want to thank you for letting me see the results of your summer's work with the Pueblo Indians. I have long felt that these people of the American Southwest were incomparable as material for Sculptors and you have demonstrated that.

This great region which is still so perfectly elemental in its character has profoundly influenced every race that has come into it. The Indians who have lived here through the ages are a part of it as are the winds, clouds, skies, rocks, trees and all other elements of its mesas, canyons and deserts.

I marvel that you so quickly seused all this; still more that you have so powerfully expressed it. You have interpreted the Indian with rare understanding.

You have felt the forces that made this race what it is. What you are producing is what we so eagerly welcome, Art that springs from our own soil and is truly American. I know of no art that has been great enough to live through the ages, that developed in any other way. So I feel that you are working a priceless contribution to the Art of our America. It is a fight

that is worthy of your best efforts, and you have shown such a mastery of it that I am moved to give you this word of encouragement and express the hope that you will go on with what you have so brilliantly started — we look forward to your exhibition with great eagerness and sincerely hope that we may have it in Santa Fe in the near future.

Be assured that we shall welcome you back, and that we are anxious to assist you in every possible way. With best regards. I beg leave to remain,

Very Sincerely Yours

EDGAR L. HEWETT

Like all great artists, Miss Shonnard has arrived at simplicity of form. However, unlike many modern artists, she has a keen sense of humor that never deviates into the grotesque. She achieves a beauty of finish, a patina on her bronzes, and a luster on her hard woods that testify to a careful technique and deep understanding of her material. While she strives for elimination of the trivial, she does not omit that which is needful for complete characterization. In the folds of her drapery, in the strong lines of the human face, in the flow and symmetry of form, she retains the essential.

It is not only in sculpture, that Miss Shonnard succeeds, although it is there that she excels, but also in painting. Especially in water color—telling of her impressions of the semi-desert of the Southwest, as well as of the more luscious beauty of

France, she has done and is doing fine work. The Art Museum hopes in the near future to have an exhibit of this phase of her art.

The temptation is great to quote at length from the many appreciations and criticisms of the foreign as well as American press but space does not permit. But here is a letter from the Curator of Fine Arts of the Brooklyn Museum written six years ago:

THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

Brooklyn, N. Y. June 27, 1921

My Dear Miss Shonnard:

As it is very unusual for a young lady as young as you are to achieve such great success in sculpture, especially in work of a masculine and powerful character, I am taking the liberty of sending you this appreciation of your bronze bust of Alfonse Mucha which was exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum early in this year. I think it is superior, as far as my judgment goes, either as portraiture, conception or technical execution in bronze, to any of its kind in the last one hundred years.

Believe me

Your dear friend

W. H. Goodyear

Curator of Fine Arts

CATALOGUE

1. Little Confidence (wood)
2. Maternity (bronze)
3. Decorative Group for a Garden (bronze)
4. A Heron (bronze)
5. "Mimi" (granite)
6. A Cock (ebony)
7. A Rabbit (bronze)
8. "Coco" (bronze)
- 9-10. Frogs (bronze)
11. A Turtle (bronze)
12. A Marabou (ebony)
13. Elegance (bronze)
14. Pluming (bronze)
15. Watching (bronze)
16. Group of Birds (bronze)
17. A Little Cat (bronze)
18. A Marabou (bronze)
- 19-23 Five Geese (bronze)
24. A Camel (bronze)
25. A Jet for a Fountain (bronze)
26. My Friend, "Coco" (ebony)
- 27-28. Little Rabbits (bronze)
29. "Mimi" (bronze)
30. Indian Chief (wood)
31. Indian with Drum (wood)

- 32. Indian Woman (wood)
- 33. Indian Mother (wood)
- 34. Indian Woman Carrying Water (wood)
- 35. Head of Young Indian (ebony)
- 36. "Little Hawk." Indian Bust (wood)
- 37. Albenita. Indian Bust (wood)
- 38. Chief Chiyesa Communing with the Great Spirit (mahogany)
- 39-41. Bas-relief of Indian (oak)
- 42. Head of an Indian (wood)
- 43. Brittany Peasant (oak)
- 44. Faith. Brittany Peasant (mahogany)
- 45. Brittany Peasant Mourning (oak)
- 46. Brittany Peasant Praying (oak)
- 47. The Gossip, Brittany Woman (oak)
- 48. The Grandmother, Brittany Peasant (granite)
- 49-57. Brittany Peasants (bronze)
- 58. The Gossip, Brittany Man (oak)
- 59. Nobleness (granite)
- 60. Bas relief of Hon. John Bigelow, Ambassador to France during the Civil War.
- 61. Bas relief of a child.