

19th and 20th Century
American and European
Figurative Bronze Sculpture



PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

Cover Image: *The Dancers*, c. 1921, Harriet Whitney Frishmuth

Photographs: Thor Rasmussen, fig. 21 and fig. 35; Michael Randolph, all other photographs

**19th and 20th Century
American and European Figurative Bronze Sculpture**

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Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum
Saginaw Valley State University

INTRODUCTION

Curating the *19th and 20th Century American and European Figurative Bronze Sculpture* exhibition has been a rewarding experience. Discovering the many works of art relating to the exhibition theme and genre that are in collections in the Great Lakes Bay Region was a pleasant surprise.

Figurative bronze sculpture, both human and animal, was the primary art form of Marshall Fredericks. It seemed reasonable that an exhibition of bronze figurative sculptures by other artists displayed in close proximity to and in context with Fredericks's work in the Museum's Main Exhibit Gallery would provide many learning opportunities for visitors. I chose to include three of Fredericks's smaller bronze sculptures in the exhibition, showing the male, female, and animal figure in motion.

Whether visiting the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Brookgreen Gardens, the Getty Museum, or the Louvre, I have always been in awe of the immense number of bronze sculptures in their collections. Both museums and private collectors worldwide have for centuries spent fortunes buying such figurative sculptures—a testament to their enduring significance.

The thirty-six sculptures in the *19th and 20th Century American and European Figurative Bronze Sculpture* exhibition represent the work of American, Austrian, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, and Swedish artists who lived from 1804 through 1998, a broad spectrum of masterful craftsmanship spanning two centuries. We chose to include the name of the foundry of each sculpture on the exhibition labels to give the viewer a sense of the number of foundries and the quality of work they were producing in America and Europe.

2 Making figurative bronze sculpture is an expensive and complicated process. Sculptors working in the lost-wax method go through multiple steps to achieve the desired outcome. They build an armature and form a clay sculpture around it; pour the wax replica using this mold and repair the imperfections created during the wax pouring process; cast and pour the bronze and weld the bronze pieces together; and finally sand blast the metal and apply the patina. The process is a methodical and time-consuming procedure that requires considerable dedication and commitment to master. Interestingly enough, numerous nineteenth- and twentieth-century artists spent their careers engaging in this process. So why did so many artists create bronze sculptures?

John Hunisak, Professor Emeritus of History of Art and Architecture, Middlebury College, Vermont, offers a rationalization:

When later nineteenth-century French critics invented the term statuemanie [statue mania], they didn't necessarily mean the term positively, but it nevertheless described current enthusiasm for sculpture quite accurately. This was true not only in France, but throughout Europe and the Americas. Sculpture was everywhere, adorning private and public spaces. During earlier eras sculptures—especially those made of bronze—had been expensive luxuries, and only the very rich could afford them, but new industrial methods of reproduction had recently brought tabletop sculpture into the price range of middle class collectors. Paintings and photographs of the domestic interiors where they lived and entertained regularly show sculptures on top of side tables, breakfronts, and mantelpieces.

Portraiture memorialized the appearance of those whose means exceeded the mundane. Small towns boasted war monuments and statues of famous men in their public squares and thoroughfares. Cities seemed to sprout statues as if they were trees or shrubs. The death of a notable citizen, political, military, or cultural personality invariably resulted in a committee with the task of raising funds and choosing a sculptor to create a monument on a prominent public space or in a cemetery. Inaugurations of such statues and monuments were occasions for great public festivities, marked with solemn oratory and musical offerings. Newspaper accounts describe crowds in the thousands turning out for such events, which were notable occasions in keeping with cultural ideals of an era, which reached its apogee between the mid-nineteenth century and World War I.¹

While the incredible “statue mania” described by Hunisak has perhaps subsided, the commissioning of bronze sculptures continues to be a popular choice for memorials and the recognition of important and beloved people in communities everywhere.

¹ Hunisak, John M., Professor Emeritus of History of Art and Architecture, Middlebury College, Vermont, via email, April 2, 2014

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

One of the enjoyable aspects of being a museum director is the opportunity to engage with people in the community. It has been delightful to work with residents in the Great Lakes Bay Region in assembling this exhibition.

Several individuals have played a collaborative role in making the *19th and 20th Century American and European Figurative Bronze Sculpture* exhibition a reality, but the person who has earned the greatest acknowledgment is David Spear, an art and antique dealer who lives in Bay City.

I met David in 2007 when he loaned historic Pewabic Pottery pieces from his collection to the Museum’s *Pewabic Pottery: Patronage, Private Residences, Public Building, Sacred Spaces* exhibition. In November 2013, David called to ask if I would ever consider an exhibition of “sculpture in motion” at the Museum. While I had never contemplated the idea, I definitely thought it was worth pursuing.

After my first visit to the home David shares with his partner Stuart Barbier, a home filled with the art they have collected over the years, I knew we had a good start to being able to assemble a fine exhibition of bronze sculptures of human and animal figures appearing to be in motion. With David and Stuart’s collection alone, I realized there was a tremendous opportunity to create a high-quality exhibition of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American and European figurative bronze sculptures, and I was confident that it could be an exhibition with regional implications. 3

Linda Petee at Delta College was eager to loan their *Boy and Girl Running* by Carl Milles, Marshall Fredericks’s mentor and friend. Ryan Kaltenbach assured me that the Saginaw Art Museum’s *Spirit Guarding the Secret of the Tomb* by René de Saint-Marceaux and *Warriors on Horseback* by Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse would be available to loan. The director of Midland’s Alden B. Dow Home and Studio, Craig McDonald, was gracious in loaning two pieces from that museum’s collection, Abastenia St. Leger Eberle’s *Hurdy-Gurdy* and Harriet Whitney Frishmuth’s *The Dancers*. Joseph LaDrig and Daniel LeVay, both residents of Bay City, graciously loaned two sculptures each.

My deepest gratitude goes to museum staff members Melissa Ford and Geoffe Haney, who worked diligently with me to determine how we would successfully display thirty-six bronze sculptures in two galleries, and Andrea Ondish for designing the catalogue. Bailey McCarthy Riley, SVSU student museum intern, spent hours researching the artists who are represented in the exhibition.

I am grateful to Yao-Fen You, Assistant Curator of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Detroit Institute of Arts, for skillfully and knowledgeably writing the catalogue essay. Thanks to my long-time colleague Cindy Newman Edwards for her excellent editing of all the text related to the exhibition. A special thank you to Michael Randolph, who spent many hours photographing the sculptures for this catalogue.

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Marilyn L. Wheaton, Director
Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum

Intersections in 19th and 20th Century American and European Figurative Bronzes

4 *19th and 20th Century American and European Figurative Bronze Sculpture* brings together a rich sampling of the diverse subjects addressed by bronze sculpture produced between 1850 and 1950, from mythological and allegorical themes to those inspired by dance and sports. Some works are pure formal explorations of the human body, while others grapple with issues of national identity and modernization. The exhibition includes important but less familiar professional sculptors such as Jean-Alexandre-Joseph Falguière, Ernst Moritz Geyger, and Max Kalish (fig. 1), as well as others who have not been adequately studied. Its specific focus on reduced versions of monumental works, many of which were produced in extended editions, highlights the increasing prominence of small-scale bronze sculpture in America as affordable domestic ornamentation in the early decades of the twentieth century—a function that continues to resonate with present-day collectors.



1. **Max Kalish** (1891–1945)
Nude Female Dancer with Grapes and Goat, 1925
Bronze
13 ½ x 4 x 7 inches
Foundry: Unknown
Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



2. Frederick William MacMonnies (1863–1937)
Pan of Rohallion, c. 1900
Bronze
14 ½ x 4 x 5 ½ inches
Foundry: Roman Bronze Works, New York, N.Y.
Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier

Although by the nineteenth century bronze had enjoyed a long tradition in the European sculptural tradition, it was a relatively new medium for America, where specialized foundries for sculpture only came into existence after 1850. Bronze foundries had existed in the United States prior to that, but only for the casting of cannons and utilitarian objects. By 1900, with the development of foundries specializing in the lost-wax casting process, such as Roman Bronze Works in New York and Gorham Manufacturing Company in Providence, Rhode Island (Gorham later opened a facility in New York City), fewer and fewer works were sent abroad to be cast (although American artists continued to train in Europe). The lost-wax method, though more complex than the French sand-casting process that had dominated American-made bronzes between 1850 and 1900, enabled American bronze casting to reach new heights. Lost-wax casting, which depends on a gelatin mold, allowed for more precise replication of texture and greater experimentation with complex compositions. Most importantly, a sculpture could be cast as a single piece rather than as parts requiring assembly. This brought about larger editions and more affordable prices for the middle-class homeowner. Fountain and parlor pieces such as Frederick MacMonnies's *Pan of Rohallion* (fig. 2) could be purchased through a variety of venues, from dealers, from bronze showrooms, and, of course, from the foundries and sculptors.



3. Annie ("Nanna") Matthews Bryant (1871–1933)
Nude Woman Washing Her Hair, c. 1920
 Bronze
 11 x 4 ¼ x 7 inches
 Foundry: Gorham Co., New York, N.Y.
 Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



4. Abastenia St. Leger Eberle (1878–1942)
Hurdy-Gurdy, 1909
 Bronze
 14 ⅝ x 6 x 6 inches
 Foundry: B. Zoppo Foundry, New York, N.Y.
 Collection of Alden B. Dow Home and Studio



5. Abastenia St. Leger Eberle (1878–1942)
***Woman with Child*, 1919**

Bronze

8 ¾ x 6 x 6 inches

Foundry: B. Zoppo, New York, N.Y.

Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier

A special strength of this exhibition is the spotlight it casts on the work of three pioneering but largely overlooked American female sculptors of the early twentieth century: “Nanna” Matthews Bryant, Abastenia St. Leger Eberle, and Harriet Whitney Frishmuth. Bryant was a painter turned sculptor. Like most of Bryant’s work exploring the female nude, *Nude Woman Washing Her Hair* (fig. 3) is intimate in size and demonstrates her familiarity with the work of Auguste Rodin. Eberle, who is represented in the exhibition by the exuberant *Hurdy-Gurdy* (fig. 4) and tender *Woman with Child* (fig. 5), was a pivotal figure in the women’s suffrage movement. She raised funds for the movement, marched under the sculptors’ banner in suffrage parades, and was a tireless advocate for the working class and immigrants. Eberle’s artistic practice and progressive social concerns were inseparable, and both works in the exhibition demonstrate her commitment to representing the strength and dignity of the urban poor, among whom she lived as a resident of Manhattan’s Lower East Side. Whether depicting a tender moment between an exhausted mother and her freshly washed babe, or the unrestrained joy of an immigrant child dancing to



6. Harriet Whitney Frishmuth (1880–1980)

The Dancers, c. 1921

Bronze

18 x 27 x 7 inches

Foundry: Gorham Manufacturing Co., New York, N.Y.

Collection of Alden B. Dow Home and Studio

7. Harriet Whitney Frishmuth (1880–1980)

Allegra, 1929

Bronze

11 ½ x 7 x 4 ½ inches

Foundry: Gorham Co., New York, N.Y.

Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



the tunes of a street musician, Eberle was eager to show moments of beauty hidden behind the shabby facade of her working-class urban neighborhood.

The liberating power of dance was also central to the sensual, dynamic, and technically complex work of Frishmuth, but her approach to the subject was based on a keen interest in the human body and movement. She studied anatomy for two years at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. Frishmuth was hugely inspired by the ballet, and she often employed professional dancers as her models. Two members of the Fokine Ballet, Desha Delteil and Leon Bartè, served as models for the two counterbalancing figures controlling the bacchic frenzy of *The Dancers* (fig. 6). Desha also posed for the sensual and technically exquisite *Allegra* (fig. 7), which was one of the many sculptures of dancing women



8. Jean-Alexandre-Joseph Falguière (1831–1900)
Vainquer au Combat de Coq (Winner of the Cockfight), c. 1870
 Bronze
 31 x 20 x 13 inches
 Foundry: Thiebaut, Paris
 Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



9. Giuseppe Renda (1862–1939)
Dancing Boy, c. 1900
 Bronze
 14 x 10 x 7 inches
 Foundry: Laganua, Naples
 Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier

produced in great numbers in the early twentieth century, inspired in part by the increasing popularity of professional dancers such as Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, and Anna Pavlova. Frishmuth's works were enormously popular in her lifetime.

Dance was not a subject limited to female artists. It enjoyed widespread appeal at the turn of the century and into the early decades of the twentieth century and was taken up by both American and European artists ready to engage with the sculptural challenges of representing strenuous ballet positions such as the arabesque and en pointe. From Falguière's *Vainquer* (fig. 8) to Giuseppe Renda's *Dancing Boy* (fig. 9) and MacMonnies's *Bacchante and Infant Faun* (fig. 10) to Franz Iffland's *L'Arrivée* (fig. 11)—all of which showcase figures supported on the toes of one leg—we see the art of cast bronze conquering moments of doubtful balance.



10. Frederick William MacMonnies (1863–1937)
Bacchante and Infant Faun, 1894
 Bronze
 33 ½ x 11 x 15 inches
 Foundry: Roman Bronze Works, New York, N.Y.
 Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



11. Franz Iffland (1862–1935)
L'Arrivée (The Arrival), c. 1930
 Bronze
 10 x 10 x 13 ½ inches
 Foundry: Unknown
 Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



12. Hugo Lederer (1871–1940)
Der Fechter (The Fencer), c. 1910
 Bronze
 22 ½ x 9 x 8 inches
 Foundry: Gladenbeck, Berlin
 Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



13. Julius Schmidt-Felling (active 1895–1930)
Testing the Foil, c. 1910
 Bronze
 8 ¼ x 5 ½ x 3 inches
 Foundry: Unknown
 Collection of Daniel LeVay

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The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sculptural engagement with dynamic movement and technically challenging compositions also manifests in those pieces related to the rise of modern sport. Hugo Lederer's *Der Fechter (The Fencer)* (fig. 12) and Julius Schmidt-Felling's *Testing the Foil* (fig. 13) bear witness to the increasing professionalization of fencing. The first regularized fencing competition was convened at the inaugural Grand Military Tournament and Assault at Arms in 1880, held at the Royal Agricultural Hall in Islington outside London. The sport was subsequently recognized at the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, and it continues to feature in every summer Olympics. In Marshall Fredericks's *Neck Shot (The Polo Player)* (fig. 14), an intrepid polo player is preparing to hit the ball under the horse's neck. First introduced to the United States in 1876, polo achieved tremendous popularity over the next fifty years. By the 1930s, soccer strategies had been integrated into the sport, which made passing the dominant feature of the game. The full gallop of the horse and the intense focus of its rider illustrate polo's transformation into a high-speed sport. Ernst Moritz Geyger's *The Archer* (fig. 15) brilliantly harnesses the tension of that split second before the release of the archer's bow. This iconic composition, first conceived in monumental form in 1895 and subsequently circulated in cast bronze reductions, of which this is one, predated archery's first Olympic appearance in 1900. The sport of archery would feature regularly in the Olympics until 1920.



14. Marshall M. Fredericks (1908–1998)
***Neck Shot (The Polo Player)*, 1931**
 Bronze
 10 x 15 ½ x 4 ½ inches
 Foundry: Unknown
 Collection of Estate of Theodore Spangler



15. Ernst Moritz Geyger (1861–1941)
***The Archer*, c. 1900**
 Bronze
 15 x 8 x 5 inches
 Foundry: H. Gladenbeck & Son, Berlin
 Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



16. Charles-Octave Levy (1820–1899)

Faneur (Haymaker), c. 1880

Bronze

17 x 6 x 5 inches

Foundry: Stamped “Bronze Garanti au Titre L.V. Deposee”

Collection of Joseph LaDrig



17. Ferdinand Lugerth (1885–1915)

Rock Mover, 1910

Bronze

15 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Foundry: Rubenstine, Vienna

Collection of Daniel LeVay



18. Alexandre Kéléty (1874–1940)
Le Semeur (The Sower), c. 1930
Bronze
7 ½ x 3 x 6 ¼ inches
Foundry: Edmond Etling, Paris
Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



19. Carl Kauba (1865–1922)
***American Indian*, c. 1900**
Bronze
9 ½ x 3 x 11 inches
Foundry: Unknown
Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier

Sentimental longing for the pre-industrial past is embodied in Charles-Octave Levy's *Faneur* (*Haymaker*) (fig. 16), Ferdinand Lugerth's *Rock Mover* (fig. 17), and Alexandre Kéléty's *Le Semeur* (*The Sower*) (fig. 18). From the relaxed contrapposto stance of Levy's haymaker to the lithe naked body of Lugerth's rock mover and the lunging, spiraling body of Kéléty's sower, physical labor is dissolved in the graceful beauty of the movements and the patina of the surfaces.

Lastly, Carl Kauba's *American Indian* (fig. 19) and Cyrus Edwin Dallin's *Appeal to the Great Spirit* (fig. 20) convey the importance of Western themes, most notably the American Indian, at the time. This was a subject matter favored by painters and sculptors alike. While nostalgia played a large role for many American artists seeking to depict the Old West, imperial and ethnographic aspirations motivated



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20. Cyrus Edwin Dallin (1861–1944)
***Appeal to the Great Spirit*, 1913**
Bronze
9 x 6 x 9 inches
Foundry: Gorham Co., New York, N.Y.
Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier

European artists, many of whom like Kauba, never set foot on American soil but instead relied on received information (for example, novels, movies) to generate their images. Dallin's dignified mounted chief, whose arms are spread wide in a moment of individual communion with a higher power, sharply contrasts with Kauba's ferocious fantasy of a gun-wielding American Indian. Dallin's sculpture represents one of over four hundred authorized bronzes that were cast in three different sizes, attesting to the commercial popularity of American West-themed bronzes.

Yao-Fen You
Assistant Curator of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts
Detroit Institute of Arts

21. Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse (1824–1887)

Untitled (Warriors on Horseback), 1847

Bronze

21 ½ x 18 ½ x 13 inches

Foundry: Unknown

Collection of Saginaw Art Museum



22. Charles Anfrie (1833–1905)

Dancing Gypsy with a Goat, c. 1880

Bronze

17 ¾ x 6 x 4 ½ inches

Foundry: Unknown

Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



24. Aimé-Jules Dalou (1838–1902)

Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier, c. 1900

Bronze

12 x 8 x 7 inches

Foundry: Susse Frères, Paris

Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



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23. Antoine Bofill (unknown–1921)

Faneuse (Haymaker), c. 1910

Bronze

13 ½ x 8 x 3 inches

Foundry: Stamped "Bronze Garanti au Titre L.V. Deposee"

Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier

26. Francisque-Joseph Duret (1804–1865)
Danseur au Napolitain (Neapolitan Dancer), c. 1850
Bronze
17 x 7 x 6 inches
Foundry: Delafontaine, Paris
Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



25. Francisque-Joseph Duret (1804–1865)
Danseur au Tambourin (Tambourine Dancer), c. 1850
Bronze
17 ¼ x 6 x 5 inches
Foundry: Delafontaine, Paris
Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



27. Edward Onslow Ford (1852–1901)

Linus/Linos, c. 1890

Bronze

15 x 5 x 6 ½ inches

Foundry: (WR) English

Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



28. Marshall M. Fredericks (1908–1998)

Persephone (Bacchante), 1937

Bronze

12 x 7 x 5 ½ inches

Foundry: Unknown

Collection of Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum

29 Marshall M. Fredericks (1908-1998)

***Two Sisters (Mother and Child)*, 1929**

Bronze

19 x 6 x 5 ½ inches

Foundry: Unknown

Collection of Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum



30. Henry Paul Hudelet (1849–1878)

***Joueur de Dés (Dice Player)*, c. 1890**

Bronze

16 ½ x 11 ½ x 9 inches

Foundry: Alberto Vignes Y Ca, Buenos Aires
Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier

32. Carl Milles (1875–1955)
***Boy and Girl Running*, 1942–52**
Bronze
24 ½ x 13 x 9 inches
Foundry: Antioch Foundry, Yellow Springs, Ohio
Collection of Delta College



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31. Henri Louis Levasseur (1853–1934)
***Le Mineur (The Miner)*, c. 1890**
Bronze
16 x 6 x 6 inches
Foundry: Société des Bronzes, Paris
Collection of Joseph LaDrig

34. Christoph Roth (1840-1907)

***Bacchus*, 1885**

Bronze

20 ½ x 11 x 13 ½ inches

Foundry: Unknown

Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



33. Louis Auguste Moreau (1855–1919)

***Le Triomphe (The Triumph)*, c. 1900**

Bronze

42 x 23 x 18 inches

Foundry: Stamped "Fabrication Francaise, Paris"

Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



35. René de Saint-Marceaux (1845–1915)
Spirit Guarding the Secret of the Tomb, 1879
 Bronze
 20 ½ x 11 x 13 ½ inches
 Foundry: Susse Frères, Paris
 Collection of Saginaw Art Museum



36. Joseph Gabriel Sentis de Villemur (1855–1937)
Tireur à L'arc (Bow Shooter), c. 1890
 Bronze
 32 x 9 x 13 inches
 Foundry: R. Cottin, Paris
 Collection of David Spear and Stuart Barbier



Marshall M. Fredericks

SCULPTURE MUSEUM

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