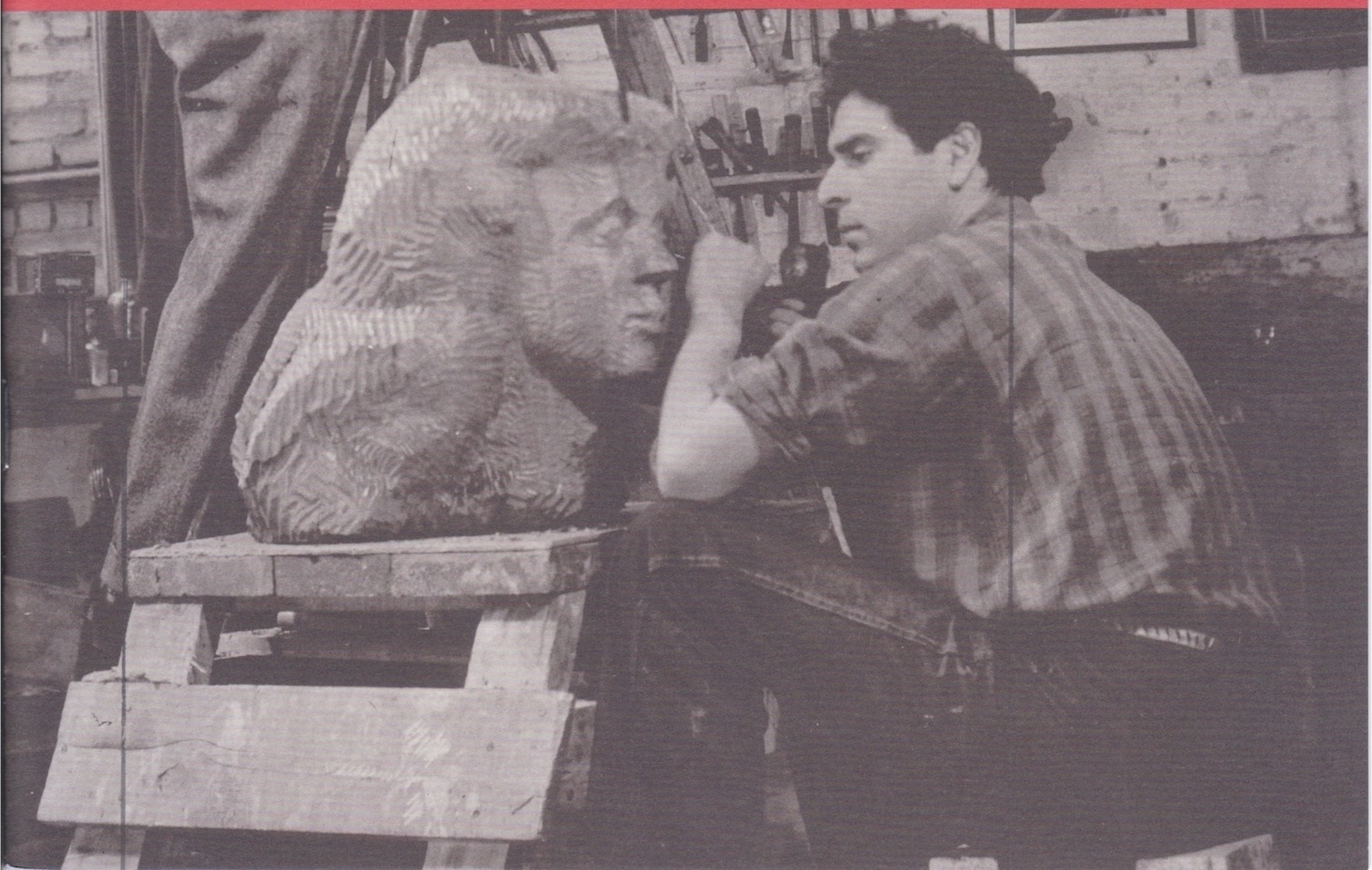




Tree Trunk to Head: Chaim Gross and Direct Carving in America





TREE TRUNK TO HEAD

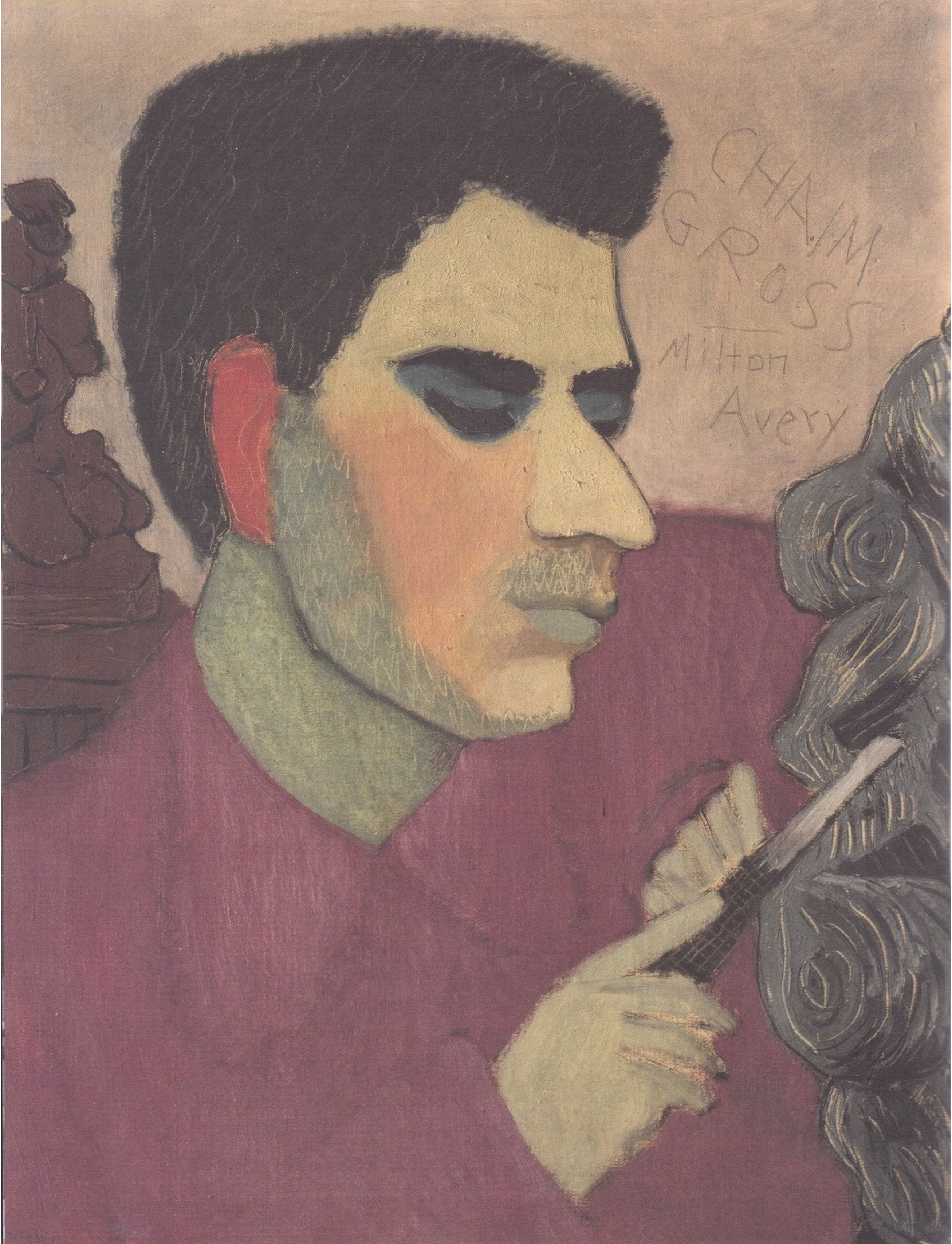
Chaim Gross and Direct Carving in America

The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

October 10, 2013–February 28, 2014

Curated by Susan Greenberg Fisher

Milton Avery
Ahron Ben-Shmuel
José de Creeft
Eliot Elisofon
John B. Flannagan
Lorrie Goulet
Chaim Gross
Gaston Lachaise
Robert Laurent
Jacques Lipchitz
Aristide Maillol
Henry Moore
Elie Nadelman
Louise Nevelson
Moses Soyer
Nicholas Sperakis
Maurice Sterne
Marion Walton
Max Weber
William Zorach



CHAM
GROSS
MITTON
Avery

← Milton Avery, *Portrait of Chaim Gross*, 1944. Oil on canvas, 21 x 18 inches.
The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

A SCULPTOR'S PROGRESS

Susan Greenberg Fisher

In the years just before World War I, a number of major American sculptors began using direct carving in their work. The term “direct carving” refers to the use of hand-held tools to carve straight into wood or stone, sometimes with the use of preparatory drawings, but without preparatory models. This process allowed for a greater intimacy with the material and a spontaneous response to its fluctuations in texture and tone. Though direct carving had been used by sculptors since the Middle Ages, in the early 20th century it returned as representing a more modern approach to form and process, in contrast to bronze castings from clay models. In America, the French-born Robert Laurent (1890–1970), Lithuanian-born William Zorach (1887–1966), American-born John B. Flannagan (1895–1942), and, after his arrival in the United States in 1929, Spanish-born José de Creeft (1884–1982), were important proponents of direct carving (fig. 1). They and other artists inspired the wood sculpture of Austrian-born Chaim Gross (1904–91), who popularized the approach in the United States in the 1930s and 40s.

Today, their work is less familiar than the sculpture of their European counterparts, such as Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) and Constantin Brancusi

(1876–1957) in France, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (1891–1915) in England, and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880–1938) in Germany. The last exhibition to examine the subject of direct carving in American sculpture was *Vanguard American Sculpture 1913–1939* at the Rutgers University Art Gallery in 1979. The general absence of this period of innovative American sculpture from art history is perhaps due to the fact that the artists themselves were a loosely joined group, coming together mainly through exhibition societies and group exhibitions, without a critical champion or single gallery that showed their work. Interestingly it was the artists themselves who tended to publish



→ Fig. 1 José de Creeft, *Orchidia*, 1919. Chased lead, 21 x 8 x 4 inches. Collection Lorrie Goulet

articles and books about their sculpture, such as Gross's film projects and books about the techniques of wood sculpture (see pp. 12-15 in this catalogue), or publications like the 1947 *Zorach Explains Sculpture*. *Tree Trunk to Head: Chaim Gross and Direct Carving in America* brings together some, and certainly not all, of the proponents of direct carving working primarily in New York between the wars, with an eye both to their unique individual contributions as well as their shared passion for materials and a rethinking of humanist subjects taken from life and nature.

Gross's own emergence as a major American sculptor in New York in the mid- to late 1930s was indebted to training with several of these artists and the strength of their example. After emigrating as a teenager from Austria to New York City in 1921, Gross attended numerous art schools in Manhattan while working odd jobs to support himself. These schools were the Educational Alliance on the Lower East Side, the Beaux Arts Institute of Design on the

Upper East Side (no longer in existence), and the Art Students League. At each school, Gross worked with many different teachers, since they often had rotating critiques by various artists. Key encounters that Gross emphasized in later interviews, however, were with sculptor Elie Nadelman (1882–1946) (fig. 2), who taught at the Institute, and Laurent, who taught at the Art Students League.

At the Institute, where Gross studied traditional sculpture from 1922-25, he occasionally encountered Nadelman as a teacher. Gross later recalled:

"The only one who really stands out and who I really had a lot of respect for was Elie Nadelman... first, I really admire his work. That's the reason I liked him. And I think he was very sincere as a teacher. I remember he used to go over every piece of sculpture very, very correctly. He would put the model on the stand and explain every part of the model and then he would bring out to the

Fig. 2 Elie Nadelman, *Acrobat*, 1920. Bronze, height: 18 inches. The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

Fig. 3 Chaim Gross, *Mother Carrying Child on Head*, 1926. Lignum vitae, 14½ × 6 × 4¾ inches. The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York



individual student what he had in his work. And I felt at that time that really he was a great teacher."¹

Gross studied with Laurent in 1926 at the Art Students League, where he focused on direct carving. One of the earliest wood sculptures by Gross, *Mother Carrying Child on Head* (fig. 3), was probably done in Laurent's class at the League. Laurent is credited with introducing direct carving in wood to the United States. Like fellow sculptor Zorach, Laurent worked under the patronage of artist Hamilton Easter Field (1873–1922), who purchased their work and gave the artists places to live and work. Field exhibited Laurent's first carvings with his own paintings before World War I, in 1913. In a pattern followed by Zorach several years later, Laurent's first works were

1. Dorothy Seckler interview with Chaim Gross, Provincetown, Mass., Sep. 1, 1964. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

reliefs on pieces of furniture made between 1911–13. He then graduated to larger reliefs and small free-standing pieces such as his *Plant Form* (fig 4), and then into stone carving and, eventually, metals. Like Laurent, Zorach (fig. 5) was also an important teacher of direct carving, working at the Art Students League from 1929–60. Zorach would write the short introduction for the catalogue accompanying Gross's first solo exhibit of 31 works at Gallery 144 in New York City in March 1932.

By the early 1930s Gross was creating ambitiously scaled sculptures, including his important 1932 *The Lindbergh Family* carved from ipil wood, which stands at over five feet tall. Inspired by contemporary events, it abstracts forms and imagery from reports of the kidnapping of famed aviator Charles Lindbergh's toddler son on March 1, 1932. Gross exhibited *The Lindbergh Family* (fig. 6) at the Society of Independent Artist's annual exhibition at Grand Central Palace exhibition hall in New York City in 1932. Sometime after the



Fig. 4 Robert Laurent, *Plant form*, c. 1915. Wood, 14½ × 7 × 6 inches. Tom Veilleux Gallery, Portland, Maine

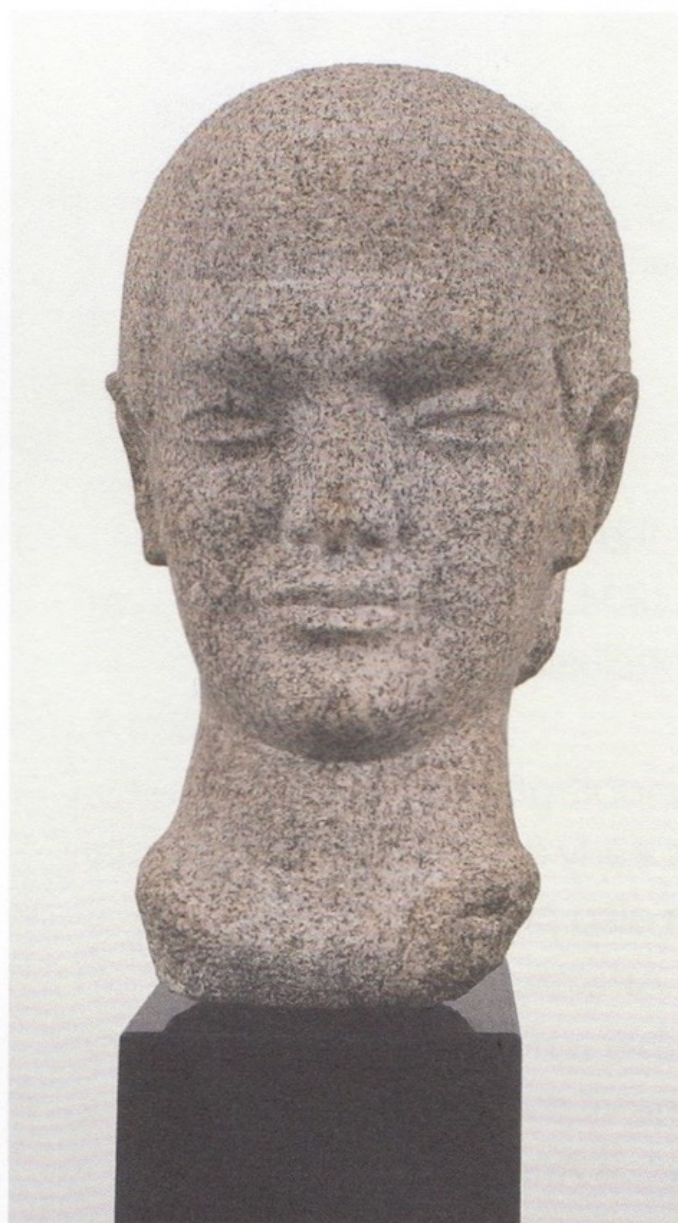


Fig. 5 William Zorach, *Head of a Boy (Tessim)*, 1925. Granite, height: 16 inches. Forum Gallery, New York City



Fig. 6 Chaim Gross with *The Lindbergh Family*, 1932, New York City



Fig. 7 Chaim Gross, *The Lindbergh and Hauptmann Trial*, 1932-34. Golden-streak ipil wood, left column: 64 × 7½ × 6 inches; right column: 64 × 5¾ × 5¾ inches. The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

arrest of Bruno Richard Hauptmann for the kidnaping and murder of Lindbergh's son in 1934, Gross carved the left pillar as a sequel and conclusion to the sensational and tragic event (fig. 7).

In its bulbous, totemic forms, *The Lindbergh and Hauptmann Trial* demonstrates Gross's early admiration of Brancusi. The totemic approach also points to Gross's deep admiration for traditional African carving, which he began to collect around this time, in the 1930s. Gross would go on to amass one of the most important artist collections of African art in America and was one of the founders of the Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C. A complex dialogue between Gross and African art and culture continued throughout his career, with thousands of acquisitions and a trip to West Africa in 1967-8 (fig. 8).

Gross's popularity as a direct carver, and what he is still known for today, stems from sculptures featuring more joyful and uplifting subjects: in particular, mothers and children, and circus acrobats and entertainers, such as the masterful *Tightrope Dancer* (fig. 9) from the Foundation's collection. A reassessment of the sculpture of Gross and his contemporaries (fig. 10), with a return to the archives, their writings and own words, as well as their art collections, will undoubtedly reveal a more complex history.



Fig. 8 Chaim Gross's collection of African Art, c. 1970



Fig. 9 Chaim Gross, *Tightrope Dancer*, 1933. Lignum vitae. 30 × 9½ × 8 inches. The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York





Fig. 10 Installation view (detail), *Tree Trunk to Head: Chaim Gross and Direct Carving in America*, December 2013. All works from the Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation unless otherwise noted. Left to right: Chaim Gross, *Head of Renee*, 1938, Sabicu wood, 19¼ × 14 × 19 inches; Moses Soyer, *Portrait of Renee and Chaim Gross*, 1932, Oil on canvas, 27 × 29 inches; Chaim Gross, *Head of Ann*, 1941, Belgian marble, 8¼ × 6 × 6½ inches; John B. Flannagan, *Head of a Young Girl*, 1938, Granite, 8½ × 8¼ × 8 inches; John B. Flannagan, *Cat*, 1939, Granite, 4 × 10 × 5 inches; Marion Walton, *Head*, c. 1935-43, Lignum vitae, 14 × 7 × 11 inches, Conner Rosenkranz, New York; William Zorach, *Head of a Boy (Tessim)*, 1925, Granite, 16½ inches, Forum Gallery, New York; Henry Moore, *Ideas for a Lithograph*, 1948, Watercolor, and pen and ink on paper, 11½ × 9½ inches; Henry Moore, *Studies for Sculpture*, 1940, Ink wash and pencil on paper, 17½ × 11 inches; Henry Moore, *Seated Figures*, Gouache, wash, graphite, crayon, and watercolor on paper, 7½ × 11 inches; Ahron Ben-Shmuel, *Head of a Poet*, 1929, Granite, 18¼ × 9½ × 9 inches, Collection Mimi Gross, New York; Chaim Gross, *Black Figure*, 1935, Ebony, 40½ × 12 × 8 inches.



➤ Fig. 1 Unknown photographer, Director Lewis Jacobs and cameraman Leo Lances filming Gross for *Tree Trunk to Head*, 1938. Photograph, 10 × 8 inches. The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

STOP MOTION

Direct Carving in Photography and Film

Sasha Davis

Chaim Gross's involvement in art extended beyond his own body of work. In the late 1930s, his process of direct carving became a subject mined by photographers and filmmakers. Direct carving's subtractive methods, as opposed to casting, which is additive in nature, creates a strong visual narrative that can be captured in film. The intensity of the physical labor, coupled with Gross's voluminous, abstracted figures, lent itself to the visuals of black and white photography and film.

The earliest film featuring Gross at work was *Tree Trunk to Head* by noted American screenwriter, director, and film scholar Lewis Jacobs (1904–1997) and shot by cameraman and photographer Leo Lances (1910–1981) in 1938. They filmed Gross sculpting a portrait of his wife, Renee, to create a 28-minute, 16 mm short (fig. 1). The silent, black and white film captures Gross's process from start to finish and in considerable detail. It also captures the aura and atmosphere of the artist's 9th-Street studio in New York City's Greenwich Village. In deep concentration, Gross sketches his wife Renee in preparation for sculpting, yet in lighter moments, he pauses to eat a sandwich, and later trims his hair (in a play on the act of "carving").

The film begins with a beam of light illuminating Gross's face as he welcomes the camera into his studio. From there, Jacobs seduces the viewer with intense close-ups of Gross's finished sculptures, establishing a dramatic prelude for a close examination of the block intended to become *Head of Renee* (fig. 2). Jacobs uses light to announce Gross's presence, but also that of the block of wood in its raw state. Close-ups of Gross's face, hands, and tools as he chips away layers of material describe the process of wood carving, but in an empathic, experiential way. Although intended as documentary, the film is more than pure explanation of process. It is humanized by the interaction of Chaim and Renee and personalized by the intensity of Gross's facial expressions as he



← Fig. 2 Chaim Gross, *Head of Renee*, 1938, Sabicu wood, 19¼ × 14 × 19 inches. The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

Fig. 3 Chaim Gross, *Acrobats Balancing*, 1938. *Lignum vitae*, 32 × 8 ½ × 10 ½ inches. The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York. Photograph by Soichi Sunami



works. Without the constant shifting of perspective by Jacobs and Lances, much of this intensity would be lost.

That same year, well-known *Life* magazine photographer Eliot Elisofon (1911–1973) shot a similarly cinematic series of images charting Gross's carving of *Acrobats Balancing* (fig. 3). Elisofon was a lifelong friend of Gross and the two men shared a deep interest in studying and collecting African art; Elisofon's fame derived from his powerful photographs of tribes of Africa. The photos highlight the tools used and the evolution of the form. Like so many of the photographs now housed in the Archives of The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, Elisofon's photographs of Gross at work (fig. 4) are beyond documentary

images: they are works of art in their own right. In 1951, Elisofon would again chart Gross's carving process in the making of his monumental *Victoria* (fig. 5). Gross works in the same fashion as in *Tree Trunk to Head*: beginning with a chalk-outlined sketch on the block of mahogany, eliminating the negative space with a gouge and mallet, followed by refinements with rasps and rifflers. The only difference in process is related to the scale of *Victoria*. In order to speed up the process of using hand tools to carve a 70-inch high sculpture, Gross turns to a handsaw first to remove wood at the waist and above the shoulders. Even as the chalk is eaten away, Gross maintains his original conception, working closer and closer to the finished form.



Fig. 4 Eliot Elisofon, Chaim Gross carving *Acrobats Balancing*, 1938. Photograph, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

Fig. 5 Eliot Elisofon, Photo essay showing Chaim Gross working on *Victoria* (detail), 1951. Photographs, all $3\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{5}{8}$ inches. The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York



In subsequent decades, Gross utilized these and other films and photographic series for educational purposes. In 1957, he published Elisofon's photographs of *Acrobats Balancing* in *The Techniques of Wood Sculpture*; over thirty-two pages of illustrations that illuminate his step-by-step process for the beginner. *Tree Trunk to Head* likewise became central to Gross's lectures about his methods. He screened the film frequently, allowing viewers to get a better sense of the direct carving process. Education was always central to Gross's work as an artist. He taught sculpture at the Educational Alliance Art School on the Lower East Side for over fifty years, and for over a decade at The New School for Social Research. It is notable that the practitioners of direct

carving, including Gross as well as Robert Laurent (1890–1970) and William Zorach (1887–1966), were the primary forces in articulating the theory and practice of the movement, as opposed to art critics, who so vocally defined other movements in twentieth-century American art, particularly Abstract Expressionism. The idea of directness in method extends beyond carving and into direct explication by the artists themselves.

Sculptors' Exhibiting Organizations, circa 1930-40

Zak Vreeland

Exhibiting organizations flourished during the Depression, with artists struggling more than ever. These groups and programs like the WPA (Works Progress Administration) helped artists sell their work and achieve public recognition. One New York-based organization, the Sculptors Guild (fig. 1), was founded by artist William Zorach (fig. 2) in 1937 as a way to exhibit modern sculpture. Not all of the members were direct carvers, but they worked in a non-academic style. The Whitney Studio Club was another venue for modern sculptors. Founded in 1914, the club was replaced in 1930 by the Whitney Museum and in 1933, it inaugurated the series of Biennial Sculpture Exhibitions. The Biennials featured both modern sculpture and academic sculpture, in the style of Auguste Rodin and Augustus St. Gaudens. Whitney Museum-founder Gertrude Whitney worked in this classical-academic style and she continued to exhibit in the Biennials occasionally through the 1940s.

The United American Sculptors was another group Gross was a member of, but it only had one exhibition, in 1939. The UAS attempted to merge the idea of an exhibiting group with a union, the members all being under the umbrella of United American Artists, which was part of Local No. 60 of the C.I.O. The UAS was affiliated with artist Rockwell Kent, who, like Stuart Davis, a founder of the American Artists' Congress, was an engaged and influential political figure among the artists of New York, and like Davis, a Communist. The Artists' Congress, founded in 1936, and the smaller American Group, founded in 1931, organized exhibitions and promoted the work of their members. They shared many of the same

members and were both politically left-leaning, showing art that highlighted social issues.

Artist and arts patron Hamilton Easter Field founded Salons of America a few weeks before he unexpectedly died of pneumonia in 1922. Robert Laurent then became president of a foundation in Field's name that ran their annual exhibitions until 1934. The painter Yasuo Kuniyoshi was Secretary of the Board of the Field Foundation, a board member of the American Artists' Congress and committee member (and sometime-president) of An American Group (fig. 3). The Educational Alliance Art School, which Gross attended in the early 1920s and where he taught for over 50 years, also held regular exhibitions. The school was founded by Henry McBride in 1895 and continues today.

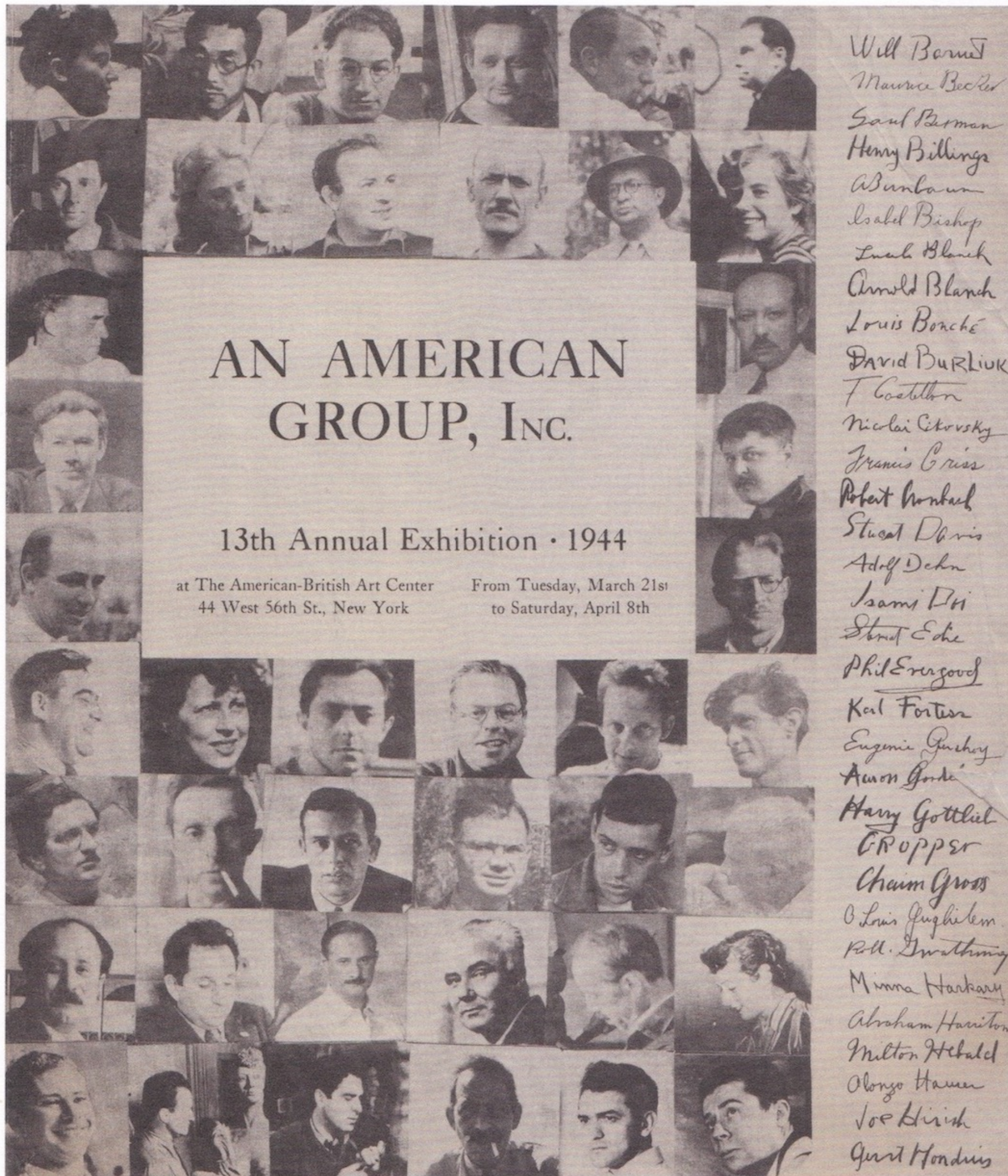


→ Fig. 1 Exhibition Catalogue, Sculptors Guild, 1942. Cover design by Chaim Gross. Archives, The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York



Fig. 2 Anonymous photographer. Helen Keller, William Zorach, and Chaim Gross (rear) at Sculptors Guild exhibition, 1938, New York City. Archives, The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

Fig. 3 Catalogue, An American Group, Inc., 1944. Archives, The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York



Artist Biographies

—IH Isabelle Hogenkamp

—ED Emily Dormitzer

—ZV Zak Vreeland

Milton Avery

American, 1885–1965

Born in Altmar, New York, Avery's family moved to Connecticut in 1898. After the deaths of his father and oldest brother Avery worked in factories to support his sisters and extended family. He painted landscapes *en plein air* early in the mornings; when he could, he attended classes at the Connecticut League of Art Students in Hartford and in 1918 he enrolled at the School of the Art Society of Hartford. In 1925 Avery met his wife, Sally Michel, and moved to New York City. She worked to support him to allow him time to paint. Avery's subject matter from this point on were largely Sally, their daughter March, and seascapes. In New York Avery took classes at the Art Students League and began exhibiting in group shows, the first being the Independents Exhibition in 1927. He befriended many of the younger modern artists, becoming close friends with both Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko, who saw Avery as a mentor and would eventually expand on Avery's soft geometric near-abstractions. In 1960, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York held a retrospective of Avery's work. However, he suffered from a heart condition that prevented him from attending; Avery died from a heart attack on January 3, 1965 in Woodstock, New York. —ZV/IH

Ahron Ben-Shmuel

American, 1903–1984

Ben-Shmuel was born in New York City where his father was a taxidermist. He began carving in his father's studio and as a young man was an apprentice stone carver. In the 1930s he began living much of the year in Buck's County, Pennsylvania, while keeping a studio in the city. He exhibited in the first few exhibitions of The Sculptor's Guild, but had no known solo exhibitions. He was known to have occasional private carving students, among whom were Isamu Noguchi, Jackson Pollock and Ruth Nickerson. In 1937 he received a two-year Guggenheim Fellowship for his sculpture. Ben-Shmuel was one of the founding members of The Artist's Club in 1949, headed by Philip

Pavia, which included most of the New York School Abstract Expressionist painters. A statement in the book *Jewish Sculptors* (1954) mentioned that Ben-Shmuel had given up sculpture. He married the sculptor Jo Jenks in 1961 and moved to Israel where he died. —ZV

José de Creeft

American, born Spain, 1884–1982

Born in Guadalajara, Spain, de Creeft worked in foundries and sculpture workshops in Spain between 1895–1900. In 1900 he moved to Madrid where he studied drawing and sculpture. At this time de Creeft also became interested in primitive art, specifically Eskimo sculpture, and began exhibiting his sculpture. In 1905 he moved to Paris to study art and lived in the thriving modern art community. There he also became one of the earliest sculptors of direct carving, while also making experimental sculptures in welded metal and with found objects. In 1929, knowing little English, he moved to New York and began exhibiting and teaching, first at the New School and then the Art Students League. During a brief stint teaching at Black Mountain College de Creeft met his future wife, Lorrie Goulet, who was there studying art. The couple remained in New York City, teaching, exhibiting, and producing work in the direct carving method, until de Creeft's death at 98. De Creeft created the well-known *Alice in Wonderland* sculpture in Central Park, and, among his other notable accomplishments, worked in hammered and carved lead more than any other sculptor. —ED

Eliot Elisofon

American, 1911–1973

Eliot Elisofon was born on the Lower East Side of Manhattan and graduated from Fordham University in 1933. While a student, Elisofon began working as a freelance photojournalist for newspapers and magazines. In the 1930s he helped found the Photo League, a multi-purpose organization to provide support for photographers. After working on several projects for *Life* magazine, Elisofon became a staff photographer there, from 1942–1964, doing

everything from front-line war reporting to food and fashion spreads. A multi-faceted photographer, he also pioneered color photography techniques, wrote books on travel, painted, and amassed one of the great collections of African Art. —ZV

John B. Flannagan

American, 1895–1942

John B. Flannagan was born in Fargo, North Dakota. Though raised in poverty, he attended the Minneapolis College of Art and Design for painting at age 19, after which he joined the Merchant Marine where he remained until 1922. After leaving the service, Flannagan was mentored by artist Arthur B. Davies, when he transitioned from painter to sculptor. Flannagan began carving in stone around 1928 and created one powerful masterwork after the other, notable for their pared-down forms, deep engagement with the material, and equal interest in figural and animal life. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, held a 1942 retrospective exhibition of Flannagan's work after his suicide on January 6, 1942. Flannagan's letters and writings on sculpture, published in 1942, attest to his thoughtful and intelligent ideas about direct carving in modern American art. —ED

Lorrie Goulet

American, 1925–

Born in Riverdale, New York, Lorrie Goulet was a student at the famed Inwood Pottery Studio in the 1930s, and then Black Mountain College in the 1940s. At Black Mountain Goulet studied with Joseph Albers and with her future husband the sculptor José de Creeft. The couple moved to Greenwich Village and Goulet slowly transitioned from painting and ceramics to direct carving in wood and stone. Goulet served as longtime head of the Artist's Equity organization, and taught for several decades at the Art Students League. Today she continues to sculpt, primarily in stone, in her Manhattan studio. —ZV

Chaim Gross

American, born Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1904-1991

Gross was born in the Carpathian mountain area known as Galicia to an Orthodox Jewish family. After being uprooted (and briefly conscripted) during World War I, Gross attended art school in Budapest and Vienna. In 1921 he and his brother emigrated to New York City to join other family members. He attended the Educational Alliance art school in the Lower East Side, which had classes in Yiddish. After a few years of working in watercolors, Gross discovered sculpture and subsequently studied with Elie Nadelman, Robert Laurent and others. Gross gravitated toward direct carving, first in wood and later in stone. He had his first solo show in 1932, which was followed by many more as Gross's commissions from the W.P.A. gained him wide recognition. Following the war, Gross began working in bronze and frequently on a larger scale. He also became a major collector of African and contemporary western art and helped found the Museum of African Art (now part of the Smithsonian Institution). —zv

Gaston Lachaise

American, born France, 1882-1935

Born in Paris, Lachaise studied sculpture at age thirteen at the Ecole Technique Bernard-Palissy, followed by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. He exhibited at the Salon from 1899-1904, and twice was the runner-up for the Prix de Rome award. In Paris he also studied under designer René Lalique, which contributed to his naturalistic art-nouveau style. In 1905 Lachaise moved to the United States with his wife and muse Isabel Dutand Nagel, who inspired Lachaise's monumental female nudes begun in 1912. Lachaise also created striking portraits of his contemporaries, including Georgia O'Keefe, ee cummings, and Alfred Stieglitz. In 1935, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, held its first-ever retrospective dedicated to a living artist and showcased Lachaise's work. Lachaise died in New York City on October 18, 1935. —ED

Robert Laurent

American, born France, 1890-1970

Born in the Brittany town of Concarneau, France, Laurent was discovered by the artist Hamilton Easter Field, who brought the Laurent family to live with him in Brooklyn. Soon after Field travelled with the young Laurent throughout Europe, touring France where Laurent was exposed to Paul Gauguin's primitive wood sculptures and to Italy where he studied with the American

sculptor Maurice Sterne. It was at Field's Ardsley House in Brooklyn Heights where some of Laurent's sculptures were shown in 1913, arguably the first "exhibited" direct carving in the United States. He first showed carvings at the Whitney Studio in Greenwich Village in 1917. Field and Laurent also created important collections of Japanese prints and American folk art in the first two decades of the 20th century, and actively sought to expose the public to these styles. Field and Laurent taught painting and sculpture respectively at the Ardsley School, Brooklyn, and Ogunquit Summer School in Maine until Field's early death in 1922. Laurent then taught sculpture at the Art Students League (where he taught carving to Chaim Gross) and Vassar College before becoming a professor at Indiana University, Bloomington, in 1942, where he taught until 1960. Laurent died in Maine in 1970. —IH

Jacques Lipchitz

Lithuanian, active in America, 1891-1973

Jacques Lipchitz was born in Lithuania, moving to Paris in 1909 to study art. Once there Lipchitz befriended the artists of the avant-garde, including Pablo Picasso and Amedeo Modigliani, and began making the first forays into abstract Cubist sculpture. Working primarily in plaster and bronze, Lipchitz moved on to a figurative and expressionistic style, often portraying themes from mythology. With the advent of World War II he and his family moved to upstate New York, and he eventually became an American citizen. Lipchitz completed many monumental bronzes in the following decades, such as *Bellerophon Taming Pegasus* at Columbia University and *Peace on Earth* in Los Angeles. Lipchitz died in Italy in 1973 and was buried in Israel. —zv

Aristide Maillol

French, 1861-1944

Maillol grew up in the Roussillon region of French Catalonia, and spoke Catalan as well as French. In 1881 he moved to Paris to study painting. Four years later he was accepted at the Beaux-Arts school where he studied under famed teachers Jean-Léon Gérôme and Alexandre Cabanel. Maillol transitioned from painting to tapestry work in 1890s, and then, due to the strain on his eyesight, to sculpture, which became his primary work between 1895-1900. He belonged to the Nabis group, which also included his friend Paul Gauguin. Maillol had his first one-man show at the galleries of Amboise Vollard in 1902, showing his tapestries and sculpture. His sculpture, first in carving and terra cotta, later in bronze, featured the

female figure, for which he received wide international acclaim during his lifetime. He was killed in a car accident at the age of eighty-three. —zv

Henry Moore

English, 1898-1986

Henry Moore was born in Yorkshire, England. He trained first at the Leeds School of Art in 1919 and then at the Royal Academy of Art in London in 1921 when he was awarded the Royal Exhibition Scholarship. In 1924, Moore became an Instructor of Sculpture at the Royal Academy and taught there for seven years. Moore's sculpture typically depicted abstractions of the human figure and he drew inspiration from the African, Egyptian, and Mexican sculpture at the British Museum. Moore's first solo exhibition was at the Warren Gallery in London in 1928. In 1946, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, held his first major U.S. retrospective. Moore spent a large part of his career executing public projects, the first of which being *West Wind* (1928-29) in London, a relief carving for the Underground building at St. James. Moore died on August 31, 1986 in Much Hadham, Hertfordshire, at the age of 88. —IH

Elie Nadelman

American, born Poland, 1882-1946

Born in Warsaw, Nadelman first studied art there, and then began a formal art education in Munich, where he was influenced by the classical Greek art in the Glyptothek Museum. In 1904 he moved to Paris where he showed at the Société des Artistes Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne. His first solo exhibition was at the Galerie Druet in 1909, where he exhibited a series of large female nudes. Cosmetics magnate and modern art patron Helena Rubinstein purchased every work from his 1911 exhibition in London. Rubinstein became Nadelman's biggest patron and the year following his inclusion in the 1913 Armory Show, she helped him move to New York. He married Viola Flannery in 1920 and with the help of her wealth began collecting art, with a focus on folk art. He opened the Museum of Folk and Peasant Arts in Riverdale, New York, in 1926. Following the market crash of 1929, the Nadelmans had to close the Museum and sell the collection and two of their homes. The artist then remained secluded in Riverdale and refused to sell or exhibit his work, and took his life in 1946. After 1929 Nadelman transitioned from elegant bronze and marble figures to making small works in plaster and terra cotta, which were found after his death. —ED

Louise Nevelson*American, born Russia, 1899-1988*

Louise Nevelson was born in Kiev, Russia and in 1905, she and her family moved to the United States and settled in Maine. After marrying Charles Nevelson, she moved to New York City where she initially studied voice at the Metropolitan Opera in 1920. Starting 1929, she studied at the Art Students League of New York with Kenneth Hayes Miller and George Grosz. In 1931, she spent time in Munich working and learning from artist Hans Hoffman, recognized as one of the most influential art teachers of the 20th century. Nevelson studied with Chaim Gross at the Educational Alliance Art School in New York in 1934, at which point she shifted to sculpture. Nevelson's first solo sculpture exhibit was at Nierendorf's in New York City in 1940. In the 1950s, Nevelson became one of the most foremost sculptors in America. She died on April 17, 1988 in New York City. —IH

Moses Soyer*American, born Russia, 1899-1974*

Moses Soyer was born in Russia on December 25, 1899. He and his family, including his two artist brothers Raphael and Isaac Soyer, immigrated to New York in 1912. Soyer's formal art education began at Cooper Union and the National Academy of Design, and continued at the Ferrer Art School in Spanish Harlem where he studied painting and drawing. Soyer drew his inspiration from the city and the Ashcan school of art, as well as the female form, especially dancers. He became an important contributor to American Social Realism, to which he stayed true despite the growing popularity of abstraction. After his first solo exhibition in 1926, Soyer won a scholarship to study drawing in Europe. Shortly after he began teaching art, first at the Contemporary Art School and after at The New School. In 1963 Soyer was elected to the National Academy of Design, and in 1966 to the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He died in New York City on September 3, 1974. —ED

Nicholas Sperakis*American, b. 1943*

Nicholas Sperakis was born in New York City in 1943. Between 1960 and 1963 he attended the National Academy of Design School, the Pratt Graphic Arts Center, and the Art Students League. He currently works primarily in mixed media and wood-block carving. Sperakis was a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1971, and has also been elected into the Society of

American Graphic Artists, the American Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors, and the American Federation of Art. He also co-founded the Rhino Horn Foundation in 1970, which focuses on neo-expressionist figurative art. Over the years Sperakis has had dozens of solo exhibitions, including one at the Grand Palais in France. Sperakis continues to live and work in New York City. —ED

Maurice Sterne*American, born Latvia, 1877 or 78-1957*

Maurice Sterne was born in Russian-controlled Latvia, the son of a Rabbi and grain merchant. After his father's death the family moved to Moscow in 1885, where Sterne studied at a trade school until 1889, when a law was passed expelling most Jews from Moscow. That year he and his mother and sister joined an older brother in New York. Sterne studied at the National Academy of Design from 1894-1899. In 1904 Sterne, then an assistant teacher at the Academy, received a scholarship from the school to travel to Paris. He lived there for three years, then slowly made his way through Europe, and Asia, spending several years in Bali. In 1915 he returned to New York, and the following year he married Mable Dodge, a wealthy heiress and arts patron. Sterne had primarily been a painter, but in mid-life he began sculpting and soon became even more well-known for his sculpture. Sterne spent much of the following decades going back and forth between Italy and New York; he taught privately in Italy and at the Art Students League. In 1932 he started his own art school in New York, where artists like George Grosz also taught. He had a retrospective exhibition in 1933 at the Museum of Modern Art. He died in Mount Kisco, New York, in 1957. —zv

Marion Walton*American, 1899-1996*

Walton was born in upstate New York and graduated from Bryn Mawr College. She had a formal education as a sculptor in France under Antoine Bourdelle, and in New York City at the Art Students League and the Borghlum School. She chose instead to pursue direct carving, and the primitive style and progressive themes associated with the movement. She was included in the Metropolitan Museum's "American Sources of Modern Art" exhibition in 1933, as one of twelve modern artists who were influenced by ancient South American art (along with John Flannagan, Diego Rivera, Max Weber and William Zorach). In 1934 she had her first one-woman show at the Weyhe Gallery,

New York. Walton was a founding member of the Sculptor's Guild in 1937 and continued to exhibit with them for the rest of her life. Beginning with a Social Realist style in stone and wood, Walton gradually transitioned to pure abstract forms in a variety of materials later in life. —zv

Max Weber*American 1881-1961*

While at the Pratt Institute from 1898 to 1901, Weber studied carpentry, clay modeling and wood carving, among other arts. In 1908, he studied with Henri Matisse in Paris, and his closest friends were the painter Henri Rousseau and the sculptors Joseph Brummer and Elie Nadelman. Weber was primarily a painter, but examples of his sculpture are known from as early as 1911. Weber worked in plaster (modeling and carving), which was then sometimes painted or cast in bronze. Weber is known as one of the first Americans to incorporate characteristics of primitive art into his sculpture. —zv

William Zorach*American, born Lithuania, 1887-1966*

Zorach, born into a Jewish community in Russian-controlled Lithuania, came with his family to Cleveland at age seven. As a teenager he studied at the Cleveland School of Art, a progressive school which also produced the artists Hugo Robus and Charles Burchfield. He then moved to New York and then to Paris to pursue painting and printmaking studies. In Paris Zorach met his future wife, the artist Marguerite Zorach. Zorach and Robus, who both came to sculpture later in life, taught painting at the Nordfelt School in Union Square, Manhattan. Zorach began making wood sculptures in 1922. One of very few artists working in direct carving in the early 1920s, Zorach soon became one of the most famous sculptors in the country. Within a decade he was commissioned for large-scale works, for historic monuments, Radio City Music Hall, and federal buildings. Zorach, his wife and his daughter Daholv all created public art under the various New Deal art programs. He was also a teacher at the Art Students League from 1929-60. In later years he spent more of his time at their farm house in Maine, which they had purchased in the 1920s to be close to their friends Gaston and Isabel Lachaise. Zorach died in Bath, Maine in 1966. —zv

Exhibition checklist

All works Collection of the
Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation
unless otherwise noted

Sculpture

- Ahron Ben-Shmuel (1903–1984)
Head of Poet, 1929
Granite, 18¼ × 9½ × 9 inches
Collection of Mimi Gross, New York
Page 11
- José de Creeft (1884–1982)
Orchidia, 1919
Chased lead, 21 × 8 × 4 inches
Collection of Lorrie Goulet, New York
Page 5
- John B. Flannagan (1895–1942)
Head of a Young Girl, 1938
Granite, 8½ × 8¼ × 8 inches
Page 10
- John B. Flannagan (1895–1942)
Cat, 1939
Granite, 4 × 10 × 5 inches
Page 10
- Lorrie Goulet (1925–)
Triad, 1987
Wood, 16 × 11 × 9 inches
Collection of Lorrie Goulet, New York
- Chaim Gross (1904–1991)
Tightrope Dancer, 1933
Lignum vitae, 30 × 9½ × 8 inches
Page 9
- Chaim Gross (1904–1991)
Two Acrobats, 1927
Lignum vitae, 14½ × 6 × 5 inches
- Chaim Gross (1904–1991)
Mother Carrying Child on Head, 1926
Lignum vitae, 1926
14½ × 6 × 4¾ inches
Page 6
- Chaim Gross (1904–1991)
*The Lindbergh and Hauptmann
Trial*, 1932-34
Golden streak ipilwood, left column:
64 × 7½ × 6 in; right column:
64 × 5¾ × 5¾ inches
Page 8
- Chaim Gross (1904–1991)
Head of Ann, 1941
Belgian marble, 8¼ × 6 × 6½ inches
Page 10
- Chaim Gross (1904–1991)
Head of Renee, 1938
Sabicu wood, 19¼ × 14 × 19 inches
Page 12
- Chaim Gross (1904–1991)
Black Figure, 1935
Ebony, 40½ × 12 × 8 inches
Page 11
- Chaim Gross (1904–1991)
Eternal Mother, 1945
Lithium stone, 23 × 20 × 17½ inches
- Gaston Lachaise (1882–1935)
Head of a Woman, c. 1918
Painted plaster, 9½ × 8¾ × 6¼ inches
- Gaston Lachaise (1882–1935)
Woman, 1927
Alabaster, 13¾ × 7¾ × 1½ inches
Lachaise Foundation, Boston
- Gaston Lachaise (1882–1935)
Plaque
Bronze, 7 × 4¾ inches
- Gaston Lachaise (1882–1935)
Dolphin, c. 1924
Paint on wood, 10 × 11 × 6½ inches
- Robert Laurent (1890–1970)
Plant form, c. 1915
Wood, 14½ × 7 × 6 inches
Tom Veilleux Gallery, Portland, Maine
Page 7
- Aristide Maillol (1861–1944)
La bergère (The Shepherdess), 1897
Bronze with brown patina,
9½ × 3 × 3 inches
- Aristide Maillol (1861–1944)
Standing Nude, c. 1905
Bronze, 15 × 4½ × 3¾ inches
- Aristide Maillol (1861–1944)
Bather with Raised Arms,
later casting of 1898 piece
Bronze with black patina,
11 × 5 × 4½ inches
- Aristide Maillol (1861–1944)
*La femme au crabe (Woman
with a Crab)*, c. 1902-1905
Bronze with black patina,
6½ × 5¾ × 5¼ inches
- Elie Nadelman (1882–1946)
Acrobat, 1920
Bronze, height: 18 inches
Page 6
- Marion Walton (1915–1976)
Head, c. 1935-43
Lignum vitae, 14 × 7 × 11 inches
Conner Rosenkranz Gallery, New York
Page 10
- William Zorach (1887–1966)
Head of a Boy (Tessim), 1925
Granite, height: 16½ inches
Forum Gallery, New York
Page 7

Paintings

- Milton Avery (1885–1965)
Portrait of Chaim Gross, 1944
Oil on canvas, 21 × 18 inches
Page 4
- Moses Soyer (1899–1974)
Portrait of Renee and Chaim Gross, 1932
Oil on canvas, 27 × 29 inches
Page 10
- Nicholas Sperakis (1943–)
Portrait of Chaim Gross, c. 1960
Oil and mixed media on canvas,
52 × 30 inches
- William Zorach (1887–1966)
Dancer
Oil on canvas, 15½ × 18 inches

Works on paper

Chaim Gross 1904–1991
Study for Sculpture, c. 1935
Ink on paper, 12 × 17½ inches

Chaim Gross & other artists
Self-portrait (carving a self-portrait), 1934
Ink on paper, 19½ × 13½ inches

Gaston Lachaise (1882–1935)
Untitled (Dolphins), 1924
Colored pencil and paint on paper,
29⅞ × 38⅞ inches

Gaston Lachaise (1882–1935)
Study of a Famous Tennis Player, c. 1933
Conte crayon and mixed media on paper,
14 × 10 inches

Gaston Lachaise (1882–1935)
Nude
Graphite on paper, 28 × 12½ inches

Jacques Lipchitz (1891–1973)
Untitled study (possibly for *Rape of Europa*), c. 1945
Graphite and ink on paper, 8¼ × 6 inches

Jacques Lipchitz (1891–1973)
Rape of Europa, c. 1945
Charcoal and ink wash on paper,
10 × 14 inches

Henry Moore (1898–1986)
Studies for Sculpture, 1940
Ink wash and pencil on paper,
17½ × 11 inches
Page 11

Henry Moore (1898–1986)
Ideas for a Lithograph, 1948
Watercolor, and pen and ink on paper,
11½ × 9½ inches
Page 11

Henry Moore (1898–1986)
Seated Figures
Gouache, wash, graphite, crayon, and
watercolor on paper, 7½ × 11 inches
Page 11

Louise Nevelson (1899–1988)
Three Nudes, c. 1930
Colored ink and graphite on paper,
17 × 14 inches

Louise Nevelson (1899–1988)
Untitled (*Woman Seated*), c. 1930
Pen and ink on brown paper,
11⅞ × 17½ inches

Maurice Sterne (1877/78–1957)
Balinese Dancer, c. 1912–1914
Graphite on Japanese paper,
22 × 11 inches

Max Weber (1881–1961)
Standing Dancer, 1912
Gouache and ink on brown paper laid
down on gold, 22 × 4 inches

William Zorach (1887–1966)
Cat
Ink on paper, 6⅜ × 10⅞ inches

Photographs

Arnold Newman (1918–2006)
Portrait of Henry Moore, 1946
Photograph, 6⅞ × 10¼ inches

Alfredo Valente (1899–1973)
Chaim Gross in the Studio, c. 1938–40
Photograph, 13½ × 10 inches

Unknown photographer
Helen Keller, Chaim Gross, and William Zorach at an exhibition for the Sculptors Guild, 1938
Photograph, 7¾ × 9¾ inches
Page 17

Unknown photographer
Chaim Gross and Max Weber, c. 1944,
with Gross's sculpture *Homage to Henry Moore* (1944), now at the Hirshhorn
Museum, Washington DC
Photograph, 3½ × 4⅝ inches

Unknown Photographer
Chaim Gross and Jacques Lipchitz, in front of a plaster for Lipchitz's Prometheus Strangling the Vulture, c. 1944
Photograph, 3½ × 4½ inches

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Tree Trunk to Head:
Chaim Gross and Direct Carving in America
October 10, 2013–February 28, 2014

Curator:
Dr. Susan Greenberg Fisher

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Unknown photographer, Director Lewis Jacobs and cameraman Leo Lances filming Gross for *Tree Trunk to Head*, 1938. Photograph, 10 × 8 inches. The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

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Eliot Elisofon, *Chaim Gross's Studio*, 1938. Photograph, 3¼ × 4¼ in. The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

Back Cover (left to right):
Robert Laurent polishing aluminum, from 1940-41 Sculptors Guild exhibition catalogue. Marion Walton, carving stone, from 1939 Sculptors Guild exhibition catalogue. José de Creeft hammering lead on *Saturnia*, from 1939 Sculptors Guild exhibition catalogue. William Zorach retouching plaster for *The Embrace*, from 1939 Sculptors Guild exhibition catalogue. Archives, The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation, New York

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Dr. Susan Greenberg Fisher
Executive Director and Exhibition Curator
The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation

About the Foundation

The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization incorporated in New York State in 1988. Founded by American sculptor Chaim Gross (1904-91) and his wife Renee, the Foundation exhibits Gross's sculpture and drawings in the couples' Greenwich Village townhouse at 526 LaGuardia Place. The Foundation also organizes cultural activities and encourages visitors to actively engage with the Studio space and extensive art collections. The Foundation's initiatives include interdisciplinary programs, special events and exhibitions, and are organized around topics related to Gross and his contemporaries.



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