



LACHAISE, Gaston

Paris 1882 - New York City, New York, United States 1935

Genoux [LF 195]

Knees [LF 195]

1933

white marble on black Belgian marble base

fragment

19 x 14 ³/₄ x 11 ³/₄, including base

signed on the base: G. LACHAISE

Acc. No.: formerly 3.1956

Credit Line: Deaccessioned by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2019

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Provenance

- 1932-1933, Commissioned by Edward M.M. Warburg and acquired from the artist
- 1956, Gift of Mr. et Mrs. Edward M. M. Warburg to the Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 2019, Deaccessioned by the Museum of Modern Art
- 2019, November 19, New York, Bonham's, "Sold to Benefit the Acquisitions Fund", lot 13 (\$ 75,075 including premium)

Bibliography

- Museum's website (accessed April 9, 2013)

Bonham's auction sale's website, <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/25246/lot/13/> (accessed December 2, 2020)

1933 Bonte

C.H. Bonte, "In Gallery and Studio: ... Alliance has Gaston Lachaise Sculpture ...," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Sunday Morning, October 29, 1933, Society Section, p. 9

1935 Eglinton

L. Eglinton, "Lachaise Survives Current Retrospective with Honor," *The Art News*, vol. 33, no. 19, February 9, 1935, p. 4, illustrated

1935 Johnson

P. Johnson, "Simplicity in the Home of an Art Lover," *House & Garden*, vol. 67, no. 1, January 1935, pp. 22-23, illustrated

1935 Kirstein

Lincoln Kirstein, *Gaston Lachaise*, 1935, repr. no. 54

1936 Ames

W. Ames, "Gaston Lachaise 1882-1935," *Parnassus*, vol. 8, no. 3, March 1936, p. 7

1947 Knoedler

M. Knoedler & Co., *Gaston Lachaise, 1882-1935*, exhibition catalogue, New York, 1947, p. 18, no. 36, the plaster model, the first bronze cast, and the present example referenced

1957 Barr

A.H. Barr, Jr., "Painting and Sculpture: Recent Acquisitions, July 1, 1955 through December 31, 1956," *Museum of Modern Art Bulletin*, vol. 24, no. 4, Summer 1957, pp. 18, 37, no. 1289, illustrated

1967 Kramer

H. Kramer, *The Sculpture of Gaston Lachaise*, New York, 1967, p. 49, no. 66, illustrated

1967 NY MoMA Barr

Alfred H. Barr, *Painting and Sculpture in The Museum of Modern Art, 1929-1967*, New York, 1967, ill. 253

1969 Goodall

D.B. Goodall, "Gaston Lachaise, Sculptor," Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1969, vol. 1, pp. 137, 661n. 23; vol. 2, pp. 317-28 448, Pl. CXXXIX, illustrated

1974 Nordland

G. Nordland, *Gaston Lachaise, The Man and His Work*, New York, 1974, pp. 151-52, fig. 85, illustrated

1977 Barr

A.H. Barr, Jr., *Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art, 1929-1967*, New York, 1977,

pp. 253, 577, illustrated

1977 NY MoMA Legg

Painting and Sculpture in The Museum of Modern Art, with Selected Works on Paper. Catalogue of the Collection, January 1, 1977, Edited by Alicia Legg, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1977, p. 53

1988 Hobhouse

J. Hobhouse, *The Bride Stripped Bare: The Artist and the Nude in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1988, pp. 193, 195, pl. 165, illustrated

1993 Hunter

S. Hunter, *Lachaise*, New York, 1993, pp. 181, 244, illustrated

1992 Weber

N.F. Weber, *Patron Saints: Five Rebels Who Opened America to a New Art, 1928-1943*, New York, 1992, pp. 208, 239, 240, 356

2001 [Metropolitan Museum of Art]

American Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Vol. II, A Catalogue of Works by Artists Born between 1865 and 1885, New York, 2001, p. 687, no. 324

2012 Day and others

J. Day, J. Stenger, K. Fremin, N. Khandekar, and V. Budny, *Gaston Lachaise, Characteristics of His Bronze Sculpture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2012, pp. 56n. 37, 66n. m.

Exhibitions

- 1933 New York

New York, C.W. Kraushaar Galleries, February 1933

1933 Philadelphia

Gaston Lachaise: Architectural and Smaller Sculptures, Philadelphia, Philadelphia Art Alliance, October 27-November 17, 1933

1935 New York MoMA

Gaston Lachaise: Retrospective Exhibition, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, January 30-March 7, 1935, p. 27, no. 54, illustrated

1957 New York MoMA

Recent American Acquisitions, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, March 14-April 30, 1957, p. 4

1957-1958 New York MoMA

Paintings, Sculpture, and Graphic Arts from the Museum Collection, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, April 30, 1957-February 17, 1958

1959-1962 New York MoMA

Second Floor Permanent Collection, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, July 2, 1959-October 26, 1962

1962-1963 New York MoMA

Paintings, Sculpture, and Graphic Art from the Museum Collection, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, October 26, 1962– November 8, 1963

1964-1969 New York MoMA

Painting and Sculpture from the Museum Collection, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, July 2, 1964-April 7, 1969

1971-1973 New York MoMA

Painting and Sculpture from the Museum Collection, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, December 21, 1971-January 2, 1973

1979-1980 New York MoMA

Permanent Collection, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, October 17, 1979-March 17, 1980

Comment

Bonham's sales catalogue, 2019, lot 13, entry prepared by Aaron Anderson with the assistance of Virginia Bundny, author of the forthcoming catalogue raisonné sponsored by the Lachaise Foundation:

In the view of art historian Winslow Ames (1907-1990), Gaston Lachaise's "marble Knees... is the most fully simplified of all [his] works, and is almost purely abstraction. The whole object has become a symbol..." (W. Ames, "Gaston Lachaise 1882-1935," *Parnassus*, vol. 8, no. 3, March 1936, p. 7). The work is an enlarged version of a three-inch-high plaster fragment [LF 281], now owned by the Lachaise Foundation, New York, which had been extracted from one of Lachaise's statuettes. As in the case of *The Knees*, Lachaise often edited his earlier sculptures in unusual, arresting ways, creating new works intended to condense and intensify the composition's impact on the viewer while inviting prolonged contemplation.

The white marble sculpture was commissioned in May 1932 by Edward M.M. Warburg (1908-1992) at the insistence of his friend Lincoln Kirstein (1907-1996)—both young men were among Lachaise's most important patrons in the early 1930s. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Lachaise carved his own sculptures himself.

According to him, *The Knees* was "progressing" by mid-December and completed on January 31, 1933. Before delivering the work to Warburg, he displayed it on a black marble base in the window of the Kraushaar Galleries, New York, in February—where, in his opinion, it looked "superb." (Letters from Lachaise to his wife on December 11, 1932, January 31, 1933, and February 13, 1933, Gaston Lachaise Collection. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library). Towards the end of the year, *The Knees* were prominently displayed in Warburg's new apartment, at Beekman Place, New York, which had been designed by Philip Johnson (1906-2005). In 1946, Lachaise's widow ordered a bronze copy [LF 174] for his 1947 exhibition at the Knoedler Galleries, New York; that cast is now owned by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. A plaster cast is owned by the Lachaise Foundation, New York.
