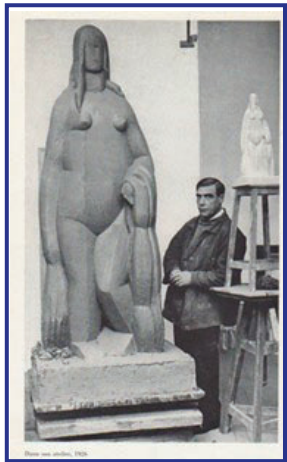


Henri LAURENS (1885-1954)



STELLA (1933)

Relief after the commission for the Karl-Marx School in Villejuif
Bronze, richly shaded brown patina.

H : 43 cm, L : 38,1 cm, D : 1,8 cm

Example signed with the "HL" monogram, numbered "0/6" cast by
"C.Valsuani, cire perdue".

Circa 1954-1960

Provenance :

Galerie Louise Leiris (paperlabel 0 barré 8958/7958)

Certificate by Quentin Laurens including these information

Henri Laurens, son of a laborer, was born in Paris in 1885. Self-taught, the artist learnt himself drawing and modeling at a young age. He completed his apprenticeship under a stonemason who carved decorative apartment fronts, simultaneously taking evening courses with "Père Perrin" on Rue Turgot.

Before meeting Georges Braque in 1911, Laurens – influenced by Rodin – produced his earliest sculptures, exhibiting his works for the first time at the Salon des Indépendants in 1913. Shortly afterwards, Picasso organized a meeting between Laurens and Léonce Rosenberg. The collector enthusiastically purchased a few works and subsequently organized the sculptor's first solo show in 1916.

Without following a particular movement, Laurens began to work with cubist circles but left the movement during the 1920s. His oeuvre could be defined in two main periods: an initial cubist view from 1910 to 1920 where he worked primarily with cut-out shapes and stone, and a second period with pieces dominated by rounded and smooth forms. The artist worked largely in terracotta, suitable for his highly structured pieces, with a sense of monumentality, a quality particularly visible in this model.

In time, angular cubist forms were turned into rounded ones, and feminine models, amenable to the artist's new manner, established themselves as an essential facet of his inspiration. The works, moreover, reflected an increasing closeness with Matisse and his distinct style.

The artist's influence would be felt among sculptors including Moore and Lobo, and Giacometti recognized him as one of the most important sculptors of the 20th century. Laurens died on May 5, 1954 in Paris. Many of the sculptor's most important works are currently at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris.

As a member of the Association des écrivains et artistes révolutionnaires, Henri Laurens has been invited to the building of the Karl Marx School of Villejuif. This city in the south of Paris was between both World Wars a socialist community which was at the origin of the construction of several areas foreseeing the hygienist and sovietic architectural style of the 1940s.

The Karl Marx School was then an important inauguration, for it concentrates the participation of major artists from the period, like An-

Laurens, *Stella*, sculpture in aluminium for the Karl Marx School.



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dré Lurçat, architect, his brother, Jean Lurçat, painter and upholster, and Henri Laurens, then at the acme of his career.

The latter created an allegorical nude female figure which was named Stella, after its star inscribed on a ribbon. Laurens and the architect chose to produce this monuemntal figure in a very modern material for the modenature of architecture, aluminium, emphasis the fact that a new era was coming. It's indeed an allegory of the importance of work (at first the rustic work in russian tradition) as a mind elevation. The fluidity of the composition is allowed by the curved line of the hanging arm followed by the ribbon in contrast with the straight angle of the left leg/hip and torso.



ONDINE (1932)

Terra cotta with pinkish patina,
H : 16.7 cm, L : 44.8 cm, D : 12.5 cm

Lifetime unnumbered example signed with the "HL" monogram,
on black wooden base (french customs label under and
Inventory Galerie Leiris number 5438)

Before 1954

Edition details :
Terra cotta edition at 6 or 8 examples + EA

At the beginning of the 1930s, the Art movements punctuated the Art History in France, like Fauvism, Primitivism, Futurism, movements which didn't stay on the long term, except for Surrealism, led by André Breton. Laurens, a passionate enthusiast of Cubism, seen in Sculpture like "modelling in sights" didn't break this evolution.

It could be surely seen with the serie of Ondines, nymphs in German mythology, which was modelled before his serie about the Sirens.

With the disappearance of "these different sights" in one figure, the main characteristic of the artist is there the movement research and a delicate modelling which underlines the naiad's smooth lines. Lightness and Grace are finely expressed by the terra cotta material which suits perfectly to the Laurens' creations.

