

GALERIE OSCAR DE VOS
S I N T - M A R T E N S - L A T E M



George Minne (Ghent 1866 - 1941)

Man with waterbag

Circa: 1897

1897 (cast circa 1910–1915)

Bronze (sand cast)

63.5 x 43 x 28 cm

Signed on the base: GMinne

Foundry mark: J. PETERMANN BRUXELLES

Various aspects of Minne's sculptural artistry around 1900 are explored in the Man with the Water Bag.

To create a perfect figuration, the sculptor chooses young male nudes. They show hardly any sign of physical strength, but the pose emphasises a certain strength and provokes spirituality. These young men are introverted and isolated from the rest of the world. He creates a slender, strong young man, placed in an almost impossible pose to keep his body in balance. His slender muscles are tense as he lifts the leather water bag just before pouring it out. Minne is not interested in showing physical strength as such, but wants to show a mentally moving scene and inner strength. In the original design of the baptismal font, water is to be seen as the source of life. Influenced by symbolism, Minne links the water theme to mirroring or reflection, looking at yourself, which leads to introspection. The multiple meanings of the work are typical of Minne's oeuvre. He tries to combine religious and secular aspects. The man with the water bag can be seen as a secular image of John the Baptist, but with a different and more universal meaning. This bronze was cast at Petermann in Brussels and stamped with their foundry

mark.

Exhibitions

1959, München, Haus der Kunst, 100 Jahre Belgische Kunst 1860-1960, 14.11-20.12.1959, cat. 90.

A similar example in bronze is in the collection of:

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, inv. KM120.672

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, inv. RF 3257, JdeP 73, LUX 282

Detroit Institute of Arts, USA, inv. 1986.48 (plaster)

Saint Louis Art Museum, USA, inv. 28:2017

Literature

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"George Minne," in: Ver Sacrum: Mitteilungen der Vereinigung Bildender Künstler Österreichs, no. 4 (1901), 28- 29.

Van de Woestijne, K., "George Minne," in: Elsevier's geïllustreerd maandtijdschrift, nr. 20 (1908), 233.

Freyer, K., George Minne. Zu den Neuerwerbungen des städtischen Museums (Sonderdruck, 1913), 71.

Van Puyvelde, L., George Minne (Bruxelles: Cahier de Belgique, 1930), no. 23, planche 21.

De Jonge, C.H., Boon, K.G., Hefting, J.V.C. e.a., Vlaamse kunstenaars van de Leie 1890-1940, tent.cat. (Utrecht: Centraal Museum, 1947), 43, cat.no. 88.

De Ridder, A., George Minne (Antwerpen: De Sikkel, 1947), no. 10.

Vanbeselaere, W., Moderne Vlaamse Schilderkunst (Brussel: Arcade, s.d.), 96.

Chabot, G., "Herinneringen aan Baron George Minne," in: Kultureel Jaarboek voor de Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen 1958 (Gent: Kommissie voor Kulturele Aangelegenheden, 1961), 111-138 (ill.).

Chabot, G., "De schilderskolonie te Sint-Martens-Latem," in: Kultureel Jaarboek voor de Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen 1954 (Gent: Kommissie voor Kulturele Aangelegenheden, 1959), 61-89 (ill.).

Hoozee, R. (red.), Veertig kunstenaars rond Karel van de Woestijne (Gent: MSK/ Provinciebestuur/ Stadsbestuur, 1970), 46-47, nr. 67.

Creuz, S., P. D'Arschot, A. Dasnoy e.a., L'Art en Belgique. Hommage à Luc et Paul Haesaerts (Bruxelles: Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1978), 87, nr. 42.

Hoozee, R. & M. Tahon-Vanroose, George Minne en de kunst rond 1900, cat. (Gent: Gemeentekrediet, 1982), 35-40, 132-133, nos. 59-60.

D'Haese, J., Moderne Vlaamse Kunst van Ensor tot Landuyt, tent.cat. (Knokke: Casino, 1985), 24, no. 30 (ill. van een ander exemplaar).

Pingeot, A., A. Lenormand-Romain, L. de Margerie, Musée d'Orsay. Catalogue sommaire illustré des sculptures (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1986).

Wilhelm Lehmbruck-George Minne-Joseph Beuys, cat. (Gent: ASLK/ Stad Gent, 1991), 142.

Valerius De Saedeleer en George Minne (Sint-Martens-Latem: Latemse Kunstkring, 1992), 64, no. 22.

Van Doorne, V., C. Baumann M.A., Sint-Martens-Latem - Worpswerde 1880-1914 twee kunstenaarskolonies (Deinze/ Worpswede: MDL/ Grosse Kunstschau, 1996), 76, nr. 10.

Engelen-Marx, Beeldhouwkunst in België vanaf 1830, deel I A-D (Brussel: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 2002), 2600.

Hoozee, R., M. Tahon-Vanroose & C. Verleysen, De wereld van George Minne & Maurice Maeterlinck (Antwerpen: Mercatorfonds, 2011-2012), 169.

Rossi-Schrimpf, I., George Minne. Das Frühwerk (Weimar: VDG, 2012), 79, 163, 190, 212, 370, ill. 74, no. P17 (ill.).

Van Lerberghe, J. e.a., 100 Jahre Belgische Kunst 1860-1960, tent. cat. (München: Haus der Kunst, 1959), 54, 79, cat.no. 90 (ill.).

Zeman, B. (red.), Gewagte Visionen, tent. cat. (Neuss/Köln: Clemens Sels Museum/ Wienand, 2023), 80, cat.no. 8 (ill.).

Artist description:

During his education at the Ghent Academy for the Fine Arts, Minne became friends with the symbolist authors Grégoire Le Roy and Maurice Maeterlinck. These young symbolists had an extraordinary influence on the young artist, who at that time had already distanced himself from academicism.

Minne made his debut as sculptor at the Ghent exhibition of 1889 and his participation was vehemently opposed by the press and the public. His progressive form language found an audience only at the exhibitions of the Brussels avant-garde circle, Les XX. He was present at these exhibitions from 1890 to 1893. Minne became acquainted with the Brussels art milieu, where he became friends with Emile Verhaeren. He also caught the eye of the French symbolists already early in his career. In 1892, Sâr Péladan invited the artist to his famous Salon de la Rose-Croix.

In Ghent, he tried to form a front against a conservative public. As member of the association Wij willen, he confronted the local Cercle Artistique et Littéraire, which followed a conservative path. His native city indeed was not especially well disposed to him. In 1895, his entry for the Ghent exhibition was even rejected. Despair led him back to Brussels, where in 1895 he registered for the sculpture class given by the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts. Instructor Charles Van der Stappen supported his pupil and found him an atelier. Via Verhaeren he also came into contact with Henry van de Velde, at that moment one of the protagonists of Belgian Art Nouveau. And Van de Velde's international contacts led Minne to the influential German critic and collector Julius Meier-Graefe, who would confer European fame on the modernism of Minne. Around the turn of the century, Minne exhibited in avant-garde milieus in Germany and Austria. He was worshiped at the Viennese Secession; Ver Sacrum, the periodical publication of the association, even dedicated an entire number to his work. He also enjoyed wide fame in France and exhibited among others at the Galerie Durand-Ruel and the Galerie L'Art Nouveau of Siegfried Bing.

In the summer of 1899, Minne went to Sint-Martens-Latem, probably on the advice of his friend Valerius De Saedeleer, who he knew from his academy years in Ghent. Together with Karel van de Woestijne, he would become the intellectual leader of the so-called first Latem group. Minne was the only member of this circle of symbolist artists who remained faithful to the village throughout his entire life, with the exception of the war period.

Minne experienced his Welsh years as oppressive. The continuous uncertainty concerning the fate of his sons at the front paralysed Minne and his wife. He did take part frequently in the group exhibitions organised by the Belgian government throughout all of Great Britain. Like his friends De Saedeleer and Van de Woestyne, he could also count on the support of the De Graaff-Bachiene family, a Dutch couple living in London who owned works by Belgian artists in exile.

In the period between the wars, the sculptor enjoyed great fame on the Belgian and international art scene. Numerous exhibitions were dedicated to his work. And in 1931 he was elevated to nobility.