



MANUEL MARTINEZ HUGUÉ DIT MANOLO (1872-1945)

Leda and the Swan

Bas-relief

Bronze proof, #1

Sandcast, probably by Florentin Godard, between 1912 and 1929

Monogram and number (on the back): IKH

Label (on the back): GALERIE LOUISE LEIRIS / 47 rue de Monceau / Manolo / Leda /
20 épreuves / 1912 / 17 x 17 / Photo N°4015

17.3 x 17.4 cm

Provenance:

- Paris, gallery Louise Leiris
- Pully, Sam Josefowitz collection.
- Paris, Christie's auction, October 21st 2023, lot #490 (Sam Josefowitz collection)

Bibliography:

- 1922 ARTICLE: Lafargue, Marc, « Manolo », *L'Amour de l'Art*, septembre 1922, repr. (one bronze proof)
- 1929 EXHIBITION: *Manolo*, Paris, Galerie Simon, Berlin et Düsseldorf, galerie Alfred Flechtheim, Francfort, galerie Flechtheim & Kahnweiler, 1929, n°7.

- 1928 PLA: Pla, Josep, *Vida de Manolo contada per ell mateix*, Sabadell, 1928.
- 1942 BENET: Benet, Rafael, *El Escultor Manolo Hugué*, coll. Miguel Angel, Libreria Editorial Argos, Barcelona, 1942.
- 1961 EXHIBITION: *Manuel, Martinez Hugué dit MANOLO - Sculptures, gouaches, dessins*, Paris, galerie Louise Leiris, 17 mai – 17 juin 1961, n°22 repr. (one of the twenty Emile Godard proofs).
- 1974 BLANCH: Blanch, Montserrat, *Manolo, sculptures, peintures, dessins*, Cercle d'art, 1974, n°421, p.242 repr.
- 1995 EXHIBITION: *Manolo Hugué, 1872-1945*, Mont-de-Marsan, musée Despiau-Wlérick, June 28th- September 4th 1995, Pontoise, musée Tavet-Delacour, September 16th -November 26th 1995.

Exhibitions:

- 1929 PARIS, BERLIN, DÜSSELDORF, FRANCFORT: *Manolo*, Paris, Galerie Simon, Berlin et Düsseldorf, galerie Alfred Flechtheim, Francfort, galerie Flechtheim & Kahnweiler, 1929, n°7 (bronze, most probably our bronze).
- 1961 PARIS: *Manuel, Martinez Hugué dit MANOLO - Sculptures, gouaches, dessins*, Paris, galerie Louise Leiris, May 17th – June 17th 1961 (an Emile Godard proof).

Manolo created the *Leda and the Swan* bas-relief at the dawn of the Great War, in 1912. He was then living in Céret, a small town in French Catalonia, in which he had stayed several times before, firstly between 1910 and 1914, then between 1919 and 1927[1]. Around 1912, Picasso, Braque, Gris stayed there, furthering their cubist research. Not far away, in Banyuls, lived the sculptor Maillol. It is in this blend of artistic influences that Manolo found the quietude allowing his art to flourish. In 1912, he benefited from a relative material prosperity gained by the contract he had just signed with the great Parisian art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler[2]. Their agreement stipulated that all Manolo's production would revert to the dealer, for a monthly payment. Until 1920, Manolo stayed the only sculptor Kahnweiler defended, year when Henri Laurens joined his select circle.

Manolo excelled in tight compositions; shapes always fit perfectly into their frames, be it sheet for drawings, block for sculptures or plate for reliefs. The reliefs he created over the course of his career appear to bridge the gap between his drawings and his sculptures. Here, *Leda's* ample body is curled up in the squared frame, and the round, geometrically defined shapes interlock. The body is robust, the limbs tangled, the forms full. This plastic language can be found in many of Manolo's creations from this period onwards: a drawing from the same year, kept at the National Museum of Modern Art in Paris

showcases a similar pose (*Nu*, [inv. AM 1984-597](#)); while in 1914, the very beautiful model of *Crouching woman*, kept at La Piscine – André Diligent's Art and Industry museum in Roubaix, France, continued this stylized and archaic artistic practice.

Leda and the Swan is a theme from Greek mythology. Leda, wife of Tyndare, fallen king of Sparte, was seduced by Zeus morphed into a swan. Hera, Zeus' wife, discovered his husband's infidelity and placed two eggs in Leda's body. From one Helene and Pollux were born, children of Zeus, from the other, Clytemnestra and Castor were born, children of Tyndare. This erotic moment of the coupling between Leda and the swan has often been represented in art history. Manolo repeatedly took up this theme in other reliefs:

- a 1919 terracotta in which the interweaving of shapes reaches a climax (Blanch n°439)
- a relief resembling ours, dated from 1923, in which Leda's face is uncovered (Blanch n°462)
- a 1925 development of this relief with the face uncovered (Blanch n°107)
- a simplified oval terracotta relief (Blanch n°481)
- a 1941 relief that builds on the 1923 and 1925 versions (Blanch n°559)

Manolo also worked on this iconography through drawings and jewels, including three pendants in bronze or silver in the 1930s (Blanch n°287 to 289).

Our proof of *Leda and the Swan* wears, on its back, a label from the Louis Leiris gallery. It is the third gallery D-H Kahnweiler owned. After the First World War, on September 1st 1920, the art dealer, whose possessions had been confiscated, associated with André Simon to open his second gallery at 29 bis Astorg street – it became the Galerie Simon, operating from 1920 to 1941. During three auctions in 1921, 1922 and 1923, these goods were dispersed. Fortunately, he was able to buy all of Manolo's sculptures back[\[3\]](#). In 1941, the merchant's activity was again jeopardized as the gallery was subjected to an "aryanization" procedure. His daughter in law, Louis Leiris, acquired the business' assets. The gallery was salvaged and continued its activity until 1988 (Louis Leiris' death). The editioning of Manolo's sculptures went on as they had been ratified by the Galerie Simon.

Kahnweiler editioned models whose proofs he scrupulously recorded, indicating their number and justification on a label discreetly stuck inside the work. This edition policy allowed the merchant to spread and publicize the work of his protégé. He organized a monographic exhibition on Manolo for the Simon gallery in 1929, which featured our *Leda* relief[\[4\]](#). The exhibition was then shown in partner galleries in Germany (Galerie Alfred Flechtheim, in Berlin and Düsseldorf; Galerie Flechtheim & Kahnweiler in Frankfurt). We can see that the

casting studied here is prior to the existence of the Louise Leiris gallery. Indeed, our work bears on its back the inscription in relief: "KHI", as it appeared on the first bronzes editioned by Kahnweiler. It was cast between 1912 and 1929 by Florentin Godard, the founder with whom the dealer worked at the time.

Like all the proofs made under Kahnweiler when he began the limited editions, this edition of *Leda and the Swan* is not signed by the artist, and bears the initials of the art dealer. Recent study by Elisabeth Lebon established that these Roman-numbered proofs are the fruit of a collaboration between the dealer Kahnweiler and the founder Florentin Godard: "Since the discovery of the archives of founder Florentin Godard, we know that he was Kahnweiler's founder from November 1911. (...) In what appears to have been an unsystematic way, and one that was recently discovered, Kahnweiler asked Florentin Godard to mark the proofs he commissioned with inscriptions invisible to the viewer (either on the back of the reliefs, or inside the rondes-bosses): a numbering, always in Roman numerals, and sometimes his initials HK, which appear in relief. (...) Kahnweiler's last commission to Florentin Godard dates from April 1929." [5]

We hereby have the numbered "I" out of twenty agreed proofs, as indicated on the label at the back of the work. The Galerie Louise Leiris planned on continuing the editioning. However, to the best of our knowledge, only two other proofs are known to exist:

- Bern, Kunstmuseum, Hermann and Margrit Rupf collection, Inv. P015 (This copy bears the embossed inscription KH IIII on the back, a remnant of the Kahnweiler label and a label from the Hermann and Margrit Rupf collection).
- Gustau Camps collection, Barcelona [6].

It is therefore highly unlikely that the editioning was continued up to twenty proofs. This one, cast during the artist's lifetime, by his illustrious art dealer, is thus extremely rare. It comes from the prestigious collection of Sam Josefowitz (1922 - 2015) [7].

[1] During the war, Manolo moved to Barcelona.

[2] Between 1912 and 1933, Manolo was under contract with Kahnweiler, between the ages forty and sixty-one.

[3] June 13th and 14th: first sale of goods confiscated by the German: "Henry Kahnweiler collection, paintings, sculptures, and modern ceramics" Part 1: <https://archive.org/details/CollectionHenryKahnweiler13To14June1921/page/n25>

[4] 1929 PARIS, BERLIN, DÜSSELDORF, FRANCFORT n°7.

[5] Extract from Elisabeth Lebon's article, "Laurens and the bronze", published in the exhibition catalogue *Henri Laurens* at the Gerhard-Marcks-Haus Museum

GALERIE MALAQUAIS
sculptures & dessins

in Bremen, from September 30th 2018 to January 13th 2019.

[\[6\]](#) Proof shown in 1974 BLANCH, n°421.

[\[7\]](#) A Lithuanian-born collector who moved to Switzerland in 1930, he made his fortune in the vinyl industry in the United States.