



Water Carrier

Date

c. 1913

Primary Maker

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska

Medium

Seravazza and Sicilian marble

Description

Henri Gaudier was born into a family of carpenters near Orléans. He moved to Paris in September 1909 and then, in 1911, after deciding to become a sculptor, moved to London with his companion, Sophie Brzeska, whose name he appended to his own. There, Gaudier-Brzeska became acquainted with various figures in the art scene, including the critic Roger Fry and the artists Wyndham Lewis and Edward Wadsworth, and managed to bridge the often sparring factions. Roger Fry commissioned *Water Carrier* for sale at his Omega Workshops, an arts venue meant to introduce the general public to modern art and abstraction by incorporating it into household goods such as textiles and furniture. In 1914, however, Gaudier-Brzeska became more closely affiliated with the poet Ezra Pound, the sculptor Jacob Epstein, and Lewis, who had broken with Fry, creating a splinter group called the Rebel Art Centre; the four went on that summer to found the Vorticist movement. Although many of Gaudier-Brzeska's early sculptures were modeled in clay, he carved this sculpture directly in marble; as his reputation grew, he was ever

more vociferous regarding the virility of the direct-carving technique: "Every stroke of the hammer is a physical and a mental effort." In his writings, he celebrated "primitivism," which he associated particularly with "Paleolithic" and ancient Egyptian art, in contrast to the classicism of the Greeks. At the outbreak of World War I, in August 1914, Gaudier-Brzeska returned to France to enlist, having been caught up in a nationalistic fervor that surprised his fellow artists. He was killed on June 5, 1915, at the age of twenty-three. *Water Carrier* belonged to his close friend Pound, Class of 1905, H1939. It passed from Pound to his wife, the artist Dorothy Shakespear, and to their son, Omar S. Pound, Class of 1951, then to the latter's widow upon his death in 2005. Omar Pound was a strong supporter of the arts on campus and donated hundreds of works by members of the Vorticist circle to the Emerson Gallery during his lifetime. Elizabeth Pound's gift of this sculpture honored her late husband's commitment to Hamilton College. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

Dimensions

Overall: 16 1/2 × 4 7/8 × 3 7/8 in. (41.9 × 12.4 × 9.8 cm)