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AMERICAN WOMEN SCULPTORS OF THE 1930S: DOROTHEA GREENBAUM, MINNA HARKAVY, BERTA MARGOULIES, AND CONCETTA SCARAVAGLIONE

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ABSTRACT

AMERICAN WOMEN SCULPTORS OF THE 1930S:
DOROTHEA GREENBAUM, MINNA HARKAVY, BERTA MARGOULIES,
AND CONCETTA SCARAVAGLIONE

By

Christine A. Plescher

During the 1930s there were many women active as artists, however, few are mentioned by historians or critics. Histories of sculpture, especially, often exclude discussion of women. This thesis focuses on four American women sculptors and their work from the 1930s: Dorothea Greenbaum, Minna R. Harkavy, Berta Margoulies, and Concetta Scaravaglione. As an integral part of the sculptural scene these artists were founding and participating members of organizations such as the New York Society of Women Artists and the Sculptors Guild. Their concern with Fascism in Europe motivated them to join the American Artists' Congress. For Harkavy, Margoulies, and Scaravaglione the economic circumstances of the Great Depression provided them with government commissions and opportunities to have their sculpture integrated into the everyday life of the community. The sculptors worked in a style influenced by the revival of direct carving in Europe and America and early-twentieth-century European movements. Their emphasis on the human form is still within the strong figural tradition of sculpture but their themes of miners, fascists, and farmers also reflect the influence of the American Social Realist movement.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

"40% of those identifying themselves as art professionals in the 1930 census were women, at a time when women made up a scant 20% of the labor force as a whole..."[1] Karal Ann Marling sees this decade with its large number of women artists as "atypical" since prior to this period only a few women were mentioned by historians or critics.[2] However, any reading of American art history of the 1930s results in the mention of few, if any, women. Histories of sculpture, especially, often do not include discussion of women.[3] In the criticism of the time, however, women sculptors played important roles. I believe this absence is also due to the emphasis on sculpture, that in retrospect, appears modernist and avant-garde. That emphasis, however, presents a narrow picture of the wide diversity of sculptural styles that flourished during the 1930s.

I will focus on four women sculptors and their work from the 1930s: Dorothea Greenbaum, Minna R. Harkavy, Berta Margoulies, and Concetta Scaravaglione. These sculptors were active in organizations such as the New York Society of Women Artists and the Sculptors Guild that worked to expand the exhibition possibilities for sculpture and create a place for art in the everyday lives of people. Their concern with political events in Europe motivated them to join the American Artists' Congress and for three of the women the economic circumstances of the Great Depression provided government patronage. They were influenced by modern European movements

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1. Karal Ann Marling, "American Art and the American Woman," in *7 American Women: The Depression Decade*, Karal Ann Marling and Helen A. Harrison (New York: A.I.R. Gallery, 1976), p. 7.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

3. Charlotte Striefer Rubinstein, however, has begun to remedy this situation in *American Women Sculptors* (Boston, Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co., 1990).

and the revival of direct carving in the United States that led to works created in simplified massive forms. I would argue that these sculptors consciously rejected much of the influence of early-twentieth-century European styles because they felt it overemphasized formal qualities at the expense of content. Instead they favored a representational figurative style with which they could communicate humanistic and contemporary social themes. The picture that emerges is of women artists concerned with human problems that they hoped to remedy through their art.

Dorothea Schwarz Greenbaum (1893-1986) was born on June 17, 1893 in Brooklyn, New York. Her father was Maximilian Michael Schwarcz, a Hungarian importer who died in the Lusitania disaster of 1915.[4] Her mother Emma was an American of German descent. Greenbaum studied at the New York School of Design for Women, the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts, and the Art Students League. At the Art Students League she studied painting with Kenneth Hayes Miller (1876-1952). Miller painted the urban scenes he saw around him: shoppers, people on the ferry, or the immigrant ghettos. Miller and many of the students who studied with him - Greenbaum, Peggy Bacon, and Isabel Bishop among them - had studios on Fourteenth Street. They also painted in a style of urban realism and were labeled the Fourteenth Street School Painters. In 1925 Dorothea married lawyer Edward Greenbaum and after the birth of her second son in 1927 began working in sculpture. One of her first sculptures, *Sleeping Girl*, 1929, was in the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exhibition.[5] She belonged to the New York Society of Women Artists and was a founding member of the Sculptors Guild. Greenbaum also exhibited at the Whitney

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4. Charlotte Striefer Rubinstein, *American Women Artists* (New York: Avon Books, 1982), p. 257.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

Studio Club and in 1941 won the Pennsylvania Academy's Widener Medal for her sculpture *Tiny* (Figure 1).

Minna R. Harkavy (1895-1987) was born in Estonia in 1895. She studied at Hunter College, where she received a B.A., the Art Students League, and with Antoine Bourdelle in Paris. She was influenced by the American sculptor William Zorach. From the late 1920's Harkavy was a well-known modernist in Paris and New York, exhibiting in Paris at the Jeu de Paume and Salon d'Automne and having solo shows at the Morton Gallery in New York in 1929 and the Ring Gallery in Paris in 1932.[6] She was a founding member of both the New York Society of Women Artists and the Sculptors Guild.[7]

Concetta Scaravaglione (1900-1975) was born in the Italian quarter of New York City on July 9, 1900 to immigrant parents from Calabria, Italy. From 1916-1920 she studied at the National Academy of Design winning Bronze and Silver medals in 1917 and 1918.[8] At the National Academy she attended a free sculpture class for young women taught by Frederick Roth. The program was difficult and slowly all the women dropped out, except Scaravaglione. The Academy, however, did not feel they could hold the class for one person and canceled it.[9] To earn the money to pay her tuition at the Art Students League, which she attended from 1921 to 1923, she first worked in a perfume factory and then a lampshade factory.[10] After

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6. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, p. 266.

7. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, pp. 210 and 262.

8. Rubinstein, *American Women Artists*, p. 255.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 255.

10. Concetta Scaravaglione, "My Enjoyment in Sculpture," *Magazine of Art*, 32 (August 1939), p. 453.

entering the League she won the first of many scholarships that essentially paid her tuition in full. At the Art Students League she was a pupil of the painters Boardman Robinson and John Sloan.[11] At the Masters Institute in 1924 she studied direct carving with Robert Laurent, considered to be one of the first direct carvers in the United States.

Scaravaglione was a member of the National Associaton of Women Painters and Sculptors, Salons of America, and National Sculpture Society, and a founding member of the New York Society of Women Artists and the Sculptors Guild. From 1925 to 1927 Scaravaglione was exhibiting at the Salons of America and from 1927 to 1934 in the annual exhibition of the Whitney Studio Club. Throughout her career she exhibited frequently at the Sculptors Guild's exhibitions, Whitney Museum annuals, and the Pennsylvania Academy annuals. In 1934 she won the Pennsylvania Academy's Widener gold medal for her sculpture *Mother and Child* (Figure 2). Her first solo show was at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in 1941 and in 1947 she was the first woman to be awarded the Prix de Rome.

Berta Margoulies O'Hare (1907-1987) was born in Lovitz, Poland on September 7, 1907.[12] Margoulies "says that childhood memories of war and insecurity shaped the expressionistic humanism of her art."[13] Her Polish-Jewish family had migrated to Belgium which was subsequently invaded by Germany during World War I. Her father was imprisoned and the rest of the family fled to Holland and later England.

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11. Rubinstein, *American Women Artists*, p. 255.

12. Margoulies was married, however, she exhibited under her maiden name. Greenbaum and Harkavy both exhibited under their married names.

13. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, p. 263.

Margoulies and her three siblings emmigrated to the United States in 1921. In 1928, at the age of 21, she became a United States citizen.

Margoulies received her early schooling in both Belgium and England. She studied anthropology and languages at Hunter College in New York City, graduating in 1927. While working as a French and German translator she

> stumbled into sculpture by accident when she went down to the Educational Alliance to take some evening classes solely for amusement. As she tells it, 'There was a classroom with all this clay, you know, and some people working. There wasn't an instructor...or a model...and the minute I got my hands in the stuff I said, "Oh my God! This is it." I went there every evening.'[14]

She attended the Art Students League in 1928, taking sculpture classes with Edward McCartan.

In 1928 she won the Gardner Foundation Fellowship for advanced study in sculpture abroad. She wished to study with Emile-Antoine Bourdelle in Paris but he died in 1929 while she was on a ship bound for France. Instead she went to the Académies Collarossi and Julien in Paris and studied anatomy for a short period at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. She found the Beaux-Arts too traditional, however, as she was already "a modernist interested in the broad forms of Maillol and Despiau."[15] During the Depression in 1931, Margoulies returned to the United States from France. She worked for a year as a social worker and then opened a studio. She was an instructor in sculpture at Finch Junior College from 1935 to 1943. While studying again at the Art Students League she became close friends with Marguerite and William Zorach. Margoulies was a charter member of the Sculptors Guild.

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14. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s artists, especially sculptors, were looking for ways to expand their audience and exhibition options. Greenbaum, Harkavy, Margoulies and Scaravaglione were intimately involved in these efforts, often as founding members of organizations. Twenty-three women painters and three sculptors founded the New York Society of Women Artists in 1925.[16] Its first president was Marguerite Zorach and both Minna Harkavy and Concetta Scaravaglione were among its original members. The three aims of the society were to "'supply the need of an outlet for the more unacademic painters, [sic] to act as a unified body in the arranging of shows of their work and to present to the public their modern expressions.'"[17] This group of modernists broke away from the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors, a more traditional and academic society. A review in 1931 comments that "the New York Society of Women Artists is frankly modern. It was founded six years ago to fill a need for an organization among the more progressive of the younger women painters in the vicinity of New York and the public presentation of their work."[18] Apparently the artists who considered themselves more progressive felt that not enough exhibitions were available for their work.

Their first exhibition was at the Anderson Galleries in New York in 1926 and "was supported by a reception committee of nearly twenty influential women of society and the arts, including Katherine Dreier."[19] Critics hailed the exhibit "'as an outstanding art event of 1926,'" while "The New York *Post* accorded it the accolade

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16. Amy J. Wolf, *New York Society of Women Artists, 1925* (New York: ACA Galleries, 1987), p. 7.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

18. "New York and Swedish Women Hold Exhibition," *Art News*, 30 (November 21, 1931), p. 13.

19. Wolf, p. 9.

of 'freshness and vitality'" and the "*Sun* headlined its surprise that the New York Society of Women Artists displayed such an 'astonishing versatility...'"[20] After their second exhibition they were called "the left wing of the feminine artistic movement,'" and a review of the 1935 exhibition which had expanded to include 32 painters and six sculptors was titled "Women Radicals."[21] The painters worked in a broad range of styles influenced by the European movements of Impressionism, Cubism, and Post-Impressionism to works influenced by American movements such as the Ash Can School.[22] Unfortunately it is not known exactly what works the women sculptors displayed in the earlier shows.

Later they held exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum with the Swedish Society of Women Artists, and in 1932 the annual exhibitions were moved to art galleries in the Squibb Building. Dorothea Greenbaum took part in the annual exhibitions of 1932 and 1936.[23] Harkavy and Scaravaglione were also still participating. In 1934 Scaravaglione's *Seated Figure* was "especially praised by the critics."[24]

The goals of the New York Society of Women Artists were not only to expand exhibition opportunities but also to raise the status of women artists. Amy Wolf writes that the New York Society of Women Artists had "a decidely more professional orientation and attempted to raise the status of the woman artist above that of

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20. "Women Radicals," *Art Digest*, 9 (February 1, 1935), p. 21.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

22. Wolf, p. 10.

23. Greenbaum's name is mentioned in two reviews: "New York Society of Women Artists," *Art News*, 30 (January 16, 1932), p. 10 and "New York Women Artists Open Their Annual," *Art Digest*, 10 (January 1, 1936), p. 16.

24. "Stimulating," *Art Digest*, 8 (February 15, 1934), p. 32.

the Sunday painter or sculptor."[25] These "Sunday painters" were often members of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors which had been founded in 1889 and "attracted women from primarily well-to-do families, who desired to be society painters."[26]

In 1936 Theresa Bernstein, chairperson of the exhibition committee of the New York Society of Women Artists, commented,

> Although much progress has been made, many artists have fear of exhibiting in a women's group, perhaps because of some weakness in their work or viewpoint. ...In important exhibitions the percentage of women has been at the most ten per cent. Comparatively few dealers handle the work of women artists. Prizes, which I don't exactly consider to be of any high value in determining artistry, are almost invariably given to artists not of the "fair" sex. Purchases also follow suit. Our government is perhaps the most impartial art patron and points the way of the future quite clearly.[27]

The artists' hesitation in exhibiting with women's groups was not unfounded. An anonymous reviewer of the 1932 New York Society of Women Artists exhibition wrote that the exhibition "is very well worth visiting, just to see how complete is their emancipation from the beribboned feminity of the average woman artist's conception of the part. Perhaps they lean a bit too far back in their endeavor to escape the taint of prettified painting and modeling..."[28] The artists could not seem to win either way. They were either too much like women or too much like men.

Helen Appleton Read, however, in a review in *The Brooklyn Eagle* of 1926 praises the founding of the New York Society of Women Artists and the inclusion of

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25. Wolf, p. 7.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

27. "New York Women Artists Open Their Annual," *Art Digest*, p. 16.

28. "New York Society of Women Artists," *Art News*, p. 10.

sculpture in its show.

> 'American women artists are not academic and traditionally feminine, and do not, as George Moore said carry the art of men across their fans. Feminine, if you will, since no art can be of the slightest significance unless it reflects personality, and personality carries with it the flavor of sex, but femininity which can be acrid and somber, lyric and gay according to the owner. Femininity can mean as many things as masculinity, not merely the traditional feminine attributes.
> The present exhibition asks no quarter on the grounds of sex; does not count on the gallant half patronizing attitude with which the world still regards women's art, a sort of 'To the ladies, God Bless them' attitude...a woman's art group is the only concrete way of demonstrating woman's success in the field of creative expression.'[29]

By participating in a women's art group, Harkavy, Scaravaglione, and Greenbaum worked toward increased exhibition opportunities and more serious appreciation for the art of professional women artists.

Despite the attempts to increase exposure, the beginning of the Depression created a loss of patronage for all artists. This loss may have been more keenly felt by the sculptors. The economic boom fueled by World War I had ended. Sculpture generally cost more to produce than paintings or prints and the larger size made it difficult to fit in the average domestic interior. Sculptors attempted to remedy this in part by creating smaller sculptures that could be placed in the home. An *Arts and Decoration* article of December 1934, perhaps timed to the Christmas buying season, highlights sculpture "of a size to fit into the American home."[30] Both Greenbaum's *Acrobat* and Scaravaglione's *Vincent Canadé* (Figure 3) were shown.

The problems of sculptors were discussed in an article in the 1933 *Art Digest* titled "Sculpture's Plight." The author found that the award money for which

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29. Wolf, p. 12.

30. "Sculpture," *Arts and Decoration*, 42 (December 1934), p. 38.

sculptors compete is considerably less than that of painters. Sculptors were also not alloted adequate exhibition space. The reviewer recommended "a program of education in the nature of sculpture...directed...toward the directors of our museums, and those arbiters of art" who have "an ignorance of the field that is astonishing and deplorable."[31] It was felt the public would come around to follow the lead of the museum directors. The Sculptors Guild agreed, stating in an announcement for their first outdoor exhibition that sculpture is "'the least known of the arts.'"[32]

The Sculptors Guild had many of the same goals as the New York Society of Women Artists. It developed as part of a general trend in the 1930s away from individualism toward collectivism. Miners organized into the United Mine Workers while artists worked together in the American Artists' Congress and the Sculptors Guild. Perhaps this movement toward cooperation was a result of the anxieties created by the economic problems of the Depression. These artists felt they did not receive enough commissions or exhibition opportunities in comparison to the members of the traditional and academic National Sculpture Society. The Sculptors Guild began on December 14, 1936 when twenty sculptors met, among them Minna Harkavy and Berta Margoulies, and formed A Society of American Sculptors. On February 17, 1937 another meeting was held and a new name was selected: The Sculptors Guild, Inc. Many of its members were not allowed to exhibit with the National Academy of Design and the National Sculpture Society.[33]

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31. "Sculpture's Plight," *Art Digest*, 7 (January 1, 1933), p. 5.

32. "The Sculptors Guild," *Art Digest*, 12 (January 1, 1938), p. 9.

33. Evelyn Berstein documents the origins of the Sculptors Guild in *The Coming of Age of American Sculpture: The First Decades of the Sculptors Guild, 1930s-1950s* (Hempstead, New York: Hofstra Museum, Hofstra University, 1990), p. 7.

Seventeen of the total fifty-seven founding members of the Sculptors Guild were women. Minna Harkavy, Berta Margoulies, and Concetta Scaravaglione were on the executive board, with Margoulies also serving as secretary. Dorothea Greeenbaum was also a charter member. Among the more well-known male sculptors who helped to found this new organization were William Zorach, John Flanagan, and Chaim Gross. Margoulies recalls the Sculptors Guild's original goals and their first exhibit of 1938.

> Several of us got together...our purpose was very simple: we wanted to get the sculptor away from his dead academic situation...All the jobs were going to the architectural sculptors...we also wanted to get the sculpture *out to people*. So our purpose was to have sculpture outdoors...And we just worked like crazy, planting it, and building stands...I think Wheeler Williams and the National Sculpture Society were awfully angry, especially when we made such a splash...It was a very beautiful outdoor show. People lined up around the block.[34]

For their first show they rented a vacant lot at the corner of Park Avenue and 39th street in New York City. In his autobiography, Zorach recalls, "Dorothea and her husband, Eddie Greenbaum, got the mayor to give us the empty lot on Park Avenue and Thirty-eighth Street. We paid a token fee of one dollar."[35] Both Zorach and Greenbaum helped to organize the exhibit. The show opened in April and in the first twelve days 19,000 visitors paid the admission price of ten cents to attend. It was called "one of the biggest art events to hit New York."[36] First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was among the eventual 39,000 who attended.

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34. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, p. 264.

35. William Zorach, *Art is my Life* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1967), p. 105.

36. "Sculpture in the Sun," *Art Digest*, 12 (May 1, 1938), p. 12.

A review in *Art Digest* comments on their break with the work of the National Sculpture Society. "Their work really belonged outdoors, but at the same time they rebelled against the works in public parks - slender and gracefully drooping nymphs, generals astride rearing horses and portrait busts made indistinguishable by weather and bird life. Instant sucess has greeted their first endeavor to give sculpture a proper showing."[37] This was also an attempt to expand their market to private patrons who might buy the works for their gardens. "Following its campaign to demonstrate the functional value of sculpture - other than the 'frog and faun' school - all the exhibits in the outdoor show will be installed against landscaped backgrounds."[38]

In the 1938 exhibit Harkavy showed *Portrait of Hall-Johnson*, Margoulies exhibited *Maternity*, Scaravaglione exhibited *Girl with Gazelle*, and Greenbaum showed *David* and *Acrobat*.[39] Scaravaglione received widespread publicity: her sculptures appeared on the covers of *Newsweek* and the *Art Digest*. Not everyone was necessarily impressed with the more modern style of this group of sculptors whose work ranged from figures rendered fairly naturalistically but in simplified planes to more abstract forms. Mayor Fiorello La Guardia made a half-hour visit to the show and before an "abstract study of a bird was heard to mutter: 'If that's a bird, I'm Hitler.'" He did, however, praise Greenbaum's *David*.[40]

Most of the Sculptors Guilds' exhibition catalogues contain a ten-point preamble stating their broad purpose to further the place of sculpture made by sculptors of "all

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37. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

38. "Sculpture Outdoors," *Art Digest*, 12 (April 1, 1938), p. 13.

39. *Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*, (New York: The Sculptors Guild, 1938), Archives of American Art, roll D-262.

40. "'If That's a Bird, I'm Hitler,'" *Magazine of Art*, 31 (June 1938), p. 380.

progressive tendencies."[41] Issues of exhibition space and cost were also addressed in point seven, "To point the need for the allocation of more adequate funds for the purchase of sculpture by museums and other educational institutions; to promote a more equitable balance in the representation afforded sculpture in art exhibitions..."[42] Since they felt their work was not getting adequate public exposure through the museum system they would take their case directly to the public as they did in their outdoor exhibitions and "assist the public to a fuller appreciation of the function of sculpture in the cultural life of the country."[43]

One goal was to "stimulate and uphold new artistic values and combat all reactionary tendencies..." as stated in point 3.[44] Charlotte Striefer Rubinstein points out the more traditional National Sculpture Society artists "continued to obtain most of the commissions for large buildings or for the estates of wealthy patrons."[45] The National Sculpture Society which had been founded in 1893 had by the 1930s grown into a powerful organization. Wayne Craven notes that it "became the official guardian of the older traditions in sculpture..." and some of its members like Frederic Ruckstull "ridiculed the works of such men as Rodin, Matisse, Brancusi, Picasso, Cezanne and Archipenko."[46]

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41. All points discussed from the preamble are found in *Second Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition* (New York: The Sculptors Guild, 1939), p. 9.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

45. Rubinstein, *American Women Artists*, p. 254.

46. Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), p. 479.

Possibly "reactionary tendencies" refers to those who disliked the modern forms of these sculptors and wished to stay with a more traditional style. John I.H. Baur addressed the predominance of the older style in a short essay in the catalogue of the second exhibition held at the Brooklyn Museum in 1938. Explaining why sculpture is not as well established as painting he notes:

> First of these has been the persistent domination of pseudo-classical ideals which informed our early sculpture from Horatio Greenough's *Washington* in the guise of a Roman senator down to Hiram Power's Victorian *Greek Slave*...The period that followed the pseudo-classical was scarcely more fortunate. The twin currents of realism and romanticism made immensely popular by Rodin, has had a pervasive and for the most part baleful influence here.[47]

It was only in the twentieth century, he felt, that American sculpture has made a name for itself by "joining the frankly experimental front of modernism."[48]

Another reading of "reactionary tendencies" comes from a comparison of the Sculptors Guild preamble and the bylaws of the American Artists' Congress. Many of the members of the Sculptors Guild were also members of the American Artists' Congress. Greenbaum, Harkavy, Margoulies, and Scaravaglione all signed the call for the First American Artists Congress.[49] The bylaws state "to oppose all reactionary attempts to curtail democractic rights and freedom of expression [in the United States] and all tendencies that lead to Fascism."[50] All the women sculptors

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47. *Contemporary Sculpture* (New York: The Sculptors Guild, 1938), Archives of American Art, roll D-262, frame 1347.

48. *Ibid.*, frame 1348.

49. "Signers of the Call" in the *First American Artists' Congress*, New York, 1936, unpaginated.

50. *Artists against War and Fascism: Papers of the First American Artists' Congress*, introduction by Matthew Baigell and Julia Williams (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1986), pp. 11-12.

had a personal connection to the protest against war and Fascism. Harkavy, Greenbaum, and Margoulies were all of Jewish descent. Harkavy and Margoulies were immigrants from Eastern Europe while Greenbaum and Scaravaglione were children of recent European immigrants.

The First American Artists' Congress against War and Fascism was held in New York City at Town Hall and the New School for Social Research on February 14, 15, and 16, 1936. Stuart Davis served as the National Secretary. In his introduction to the publication of the papers from the Congress Davis writes that "more than 400 leading American artists, academicians and modernists, purists and social realists, were brought together on a platform in defense of their common interests."[51] The style of the artists was not considered as important as their uniting for support to benefit all artists. The Congress was a "result of nearly a year of meetings and planned effort by a group of New York Artists who took the initiative in searching for a way out of the economic and cultural impasse confronting virtually all artists."[52] Among those who met in May of 1935 were Stuart Davis, Peter Blume, William Gropper, and Minna Harkavy. Later Harkavy also served on the executive board.[53]

The Congress was responding to two important crises: the Depression and the spread of Fascism across Europe. Mussolini had seized power in Italy and set up a fascist dictatorship in 1922 and the National Socialist German Workers' Party (the Nazis) under Hitler had taken control of Germany in 1933. The American Artists' Congress protested their policies of nationalism, racism, and military aggression. The

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51. Stuart Davis, introduction to *First American Artists' Congress* (New York, 1936), unpaginated introduction.

52. *Ibid.*, unpaginated introduction.

53. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, p. 259.

number of artists out of work during the Depression also concerned the American Artists' Congress. It was felt that by organizing they could do more about these problems than as solitary individuals in a complex industrial society. The American Artists' Congress supported the creation of government work programs during the 1930s. Not only did such programs help to keep artists employed, but the government relief programs also gave artists greater opportunities to expand their audience. Many of the works were placed in public areas such as schools and post offices.

During the 1930s the government became a significant patron of the arts. The stock market crash in October of 1929 and the worsening financial crisis that followed meant the loss of buyers for artists. No one was purchasing art, especially the more expensive sculpture. A memoir by the sculptor Robert Cronbach, who was employed on the WPA/FAP from 1936 to 1939, sums up the situation.

> In 1936, in the middle of the Depression, the private market for contemporary art - painting or sculpture - was almost nonexistent. Private galleries, individual collectors, museums, all were practically frozen as far as sales were concerned. Architectural sculpture - sculpture designed to embellish a building or complement a particular site - was in the same situation.[54]

To add to the problem the unemployment rate for artists was higher than that of the general population. Marlene Park notes that "art had boomed in the 1920's when the number of artists involved in the visual arts had increased 62 percent from 35,400 to 57,265 by one estimate, whereas the population of the United States increased by only 16 percent."[55]

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54. Robert Cronbach, "The New Deal Sculpture Projects," in *The New Deal Art Projects, An Anthology of Memoirs*, ed. Francis V. O'Conner (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1972), p. 139.

55. Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, *New Deal for Art: The Government Art Projects of the 1930s with Examples from New York City and State* (Hamilton, New York: Gallery Association of New York State, 1977), p. 2.

Both Margoulies and Scaravaglione were able to realize their ideals of becoming artists involved directly in society through their participation in government relief programs. Edward Bruce, a painter, lawyer, and Treasury Department adminstrator, established The Section of Painting and Sculpture within the Treasury Department in October 1934. It continued until June 1943. Holger Cahill was the National Director of the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP) which ran from September 1935 to May 1943. The WPA/FAP gave work to artists based on financial need, while the Section awarded commissions to artists based on competitions. Margoulies and Scaravaglione appear to have done the most work under the government projects. Harkavy apparently did only one relief[56] and Greenbaum was not eligible for any of the relief programs.[57]

The Treasury Department commissions were national "open anonymous competitions based exclusively on merit."[58] A 1938 art guide to the Section's work notes that "women artists have exactly the same chances as the men, since these competitions are determined on merit and merit alone."[59] This undoubtedly worked to the advantage of women sculptors especially as much less sculpture was commissioned as

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56. It is likely Harkavy did more government work than the one relief created late in the Federal Art Project's existence. Robert Cronbach, in his essay, mentions her as a good example of figurative sculptors on the Project who were working in an expressionistic style. It would seem this evaluation would be based on more than one project. Robert Cronbach, "The New Deal Sculpture Projects," in *The New Deal Art Projects*, p. 141.

57. Rubinstein, *American Women Artists*, p. 254.

58. *Art Guides number two: A Guide to the Painting and Sculpture in the Post Office Department Building, Washington, District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: Art in Federal Buildings, Inc., 1938), Forbes Watson Papers, Archives of American Art, roll D-51, frame 882.

59. *Ibid.*, frame 893.

compared to painting. Only 300 of the total 1400 commissions were sculpture as sculptures were considerably more expensive to produce than were murals.[60]

Scaravaglione received four of the prestigious commissions from the Treasury Department. *Railway Mail - 1862*, an aluminum figure, was done for the central U.S. Federal Post Office, Washington, D.C. in 1936.[61] She completed two reliefs: *Agriculture* (Figure 4) for the Federal Trade Commission in 1938, and *Aborigines*, in 1942 was designed for the Post Office in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania. *Woman with Mountain Sheep* (Figure 5) was created for the Garden Court of the Federal Building at the New York World's Fair of 1939. Margoulies also received Section commissions. Like Scaravaglione, she designed an aluminum sculpture for the Washington, D.C. central post office in 1936 titled *Colonial Foot Postman*.[62] For the post office in Canton, New York she created a painted plaster relief in 1939 called *Stillman Foote Acquires Homestead of John Harrington* for which she received $800.[63] Harkavy carved a wood relief, *Industry and Landscape of Winchendon*, in 1942 for the post office in Winchendon, Massachusetts.[64]

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60. Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, *Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 1984), p. 130.

61. Rubinstein in *American Women Sculptors*, p. 269, dates this piece to 1935. However the "Geographical Directory of Murals and Sculptures Commissioned by Section of Fine Arts, Public Buildings Administration, Federal Works Agency," *American Art Annual* 35 (1941-1942), p. 630, and Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz in *Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal*, p. 235, date the piece to 1936.

62. Park and Markowitz, *Democratic Vistas*, p. 235.

63. Francis V. O'Conner, *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now* (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, 1969), p. 36.

64. Park and Markowitz, *Democratic Vistas*, p. 214.

Both Scaravaglione and Margoulies produced aluminum sculptures for the U.S. Federal Post Office as part of a series of mail carriers from different periods. Twelve painters and sixteen sculptors received commissions for this project. Marlene Park observes that even "the mail, especially Rural Free Delivery, was appropriated by the New Deal and tied to the idea of democracy."[65] Everyone equally receives the mail. More important, however, to artists like Margoulies and Scaravaglione was that everyone who went to the post office would also be exposed to their art. Margoulies "remembers what it meant to her to get the federal commission--to create art for the people: 'I tell you very frankly, I was terribly excited about getting a job to do for a purpose that people will *see*; and that I had *won* it.'"[66]

The art generated by the Section of Painting and Sculpture under Bruce "assumed officially approved and socially useful forms, as decorative art to transform public buildings, not as propaganda to transform society."[67] The emphasis was on the American Scene with its depictions of rural and city life that "stressed traditional American values...and focused not only on contemporary America but on the past to dramatize the full sweep of American history in murals throughout the country."[68] The style preferred was representational, and it was not an art of social protest. The sculptures commissioned by the Section were usually small reliefs installed over the postmaster's door. The work of Margoulies, Scaravaglione, and Harkavy under the Section of Painting and Sculpture follow these themes.

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65. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

66. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, p. 264.

67. Belisario R. Contreras, *Tradition and Innovation in New Deal Art* (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1983), p. 19.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

Holger Cahill, director of the WPA/FAP, emphasized the artist and community relationship and believed that art should be part of the daily lives of all people. He thought that art "'should have use; it should be interwoven with the very stuff and texture of human experience, intensifying that experience, making it more profound, rich, clear, and coherent.'"[69] Unlike Edward Bruce, director of the Section, he did not emphasize the American Scene but encouraged a variety of subjects and styles. Artists working for the WPA/FAP were not making art just to make it, but were encouraged to design art for public places. Cahill felt that it was "evident that sculpture will not find its place in the life of our time until a harmonious relationship with architecture has been established...For these reasons the greater part of the Project sculpture has been designed to harmonize with architectural plans, and to stimulate a demand for sculpture in public buildings...A good deal of the free sculpture on the Project has been designed to fit specific locations in public parks, botanical gardens, and courtyards of buildings."[70] As an example, he cited Scaravaglione's *Girl with Gazelle* (Figure 6).

Scaravaglione was employed in the Sculpture Division of the WPA Federal Art Project from 1935-1939. Margoulies was employed at least in the year 1936 when she sculpted a bust, *Andrew Jackson*. Scaravaglione created at least two sculptures under the WPA/FAP. In keeping with Cahill's philosophy, *Young Girl Reading* (Figure 7) was designed for the Evander Childs High School in New York and *Girl with Gazelle* was placed in the courtyard of William Cullen Bryant High School in Queens. Belisaro Contreras described *Young Girl Reading*: "A *contrapposto* movement and

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69. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

70. Holger Cahill, *New Horizons in American Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936), p. 37.

simple rendering reveal an awakening of life through biological and intellectual growth. The work, sensitive and modern in its concept, relates to an architectural environment..."[71] Scaravaglione successfully related subject matter to location and to the people who would see it on a daily basis.

As artists began to work for their new patron - the government - expectations arose on both sides as to the role of the artist. Both were optimistic that the patronage would create a new positive relationship between the artist and the public. The artists looked for the opportunity to have their work exposed to large numbers of people and to function in a socially useful way as part of a post office or other public building. The government also had its goals. Park writes that project officials "assumed that by providing work relief for large numbers of artists, they were also creating a system of government patronage which, they hoped, would have a significant impact on American art"[72] and that they would be creating a "better art for that society."[73]

Although there was occasional grumbling from the artists on the subject matter and styles suggested by project administrators most felt government patronage was a positive force. Both the bylaws of the American Artists' Congress and the preamble of the Sculptors Guild advocated the continuation of government support for the arts. The American Artist's Congress bylaws advocated "uphold[ing] permanent Governmental support for the advancement of American art."[74] The Sculptors Guild preamble declared, "To encourage and support government recognition of the arts; to

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71. Contreras, p. 200.

72. Park and Markowitz, *New Deal for Art*, p. 7.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

74. *Artists against War and Fascism*, in introduction by Baigell and Williams, p. 11.

advocate a program calculated to insure to the arts a permanent place in a national educational scheme; to work for the inclusion of sculpture in larger measure in civic planning."[75] Sculptors agreed that government patronage would help sustain a mutually beneficial relationship between artists, government, and the public. The style of art, however, best suited to perpetuating this relationship with the wider public was another question.

In 1952, Andrew C. Ritchie wrote that the most significant factor in the revival of sculpture in the twentieth century is "the diversion of...interest from problems of literary illustration or interpretation to the more fundamental problems of form, space and light."[76] Gone were the earlier allegorical themes of justice or liberty, rather, the interest shifted to formal and aesthetic concerns. This did not, however, lead to a non-objective style for most of the artists working during the 1930s. Interest in formal elements was tempered by concern for their message and their audience.

A majority of American sculptors working during this decade did not directly accept the European movements of Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism.[77] Even the Amory Show of 1913 that revolutionized American painting had little or no effect on the well-known sculptors of the day.[78] Rather the influence of artists like Constantin Brancusi and Pablo Picasso manifested itself in the simplication and abstraction of form. But the highly polished forms of Brancusi and the fractured forms of

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75. *Second Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*, p. 9.

76. Andrew Carnduff Ritchie, *Sculpture of the Twentieth Century* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1952), p. 11.

77. Craven, p. 555.

78. Daniel Robbins, "Statues to Sculpture," *200 Years of American Sculpture*, Tom Armstrong and others (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art and David R. Godine, 1976), p. 117.

Picasso were not followed by artists like Zorach, Greenbaum, Harkavy, Margoulies, and Scaravaglione. I would argue, not because they were naively unaware of the modern movements or just behind the times, but because such modernist styles did not achieve what they sought to accomplish in their art.

The influence of Auguste Rodin was felt, but transformed through the vision of his students, Emile Antoine Bourdelle and Aristide Maillol. Harkavy studied in Paris with Bourdelle and Margoulies had hoped to study with him.[79] In a group exhibition of seven women sculptors held in 1931, Scaravaglione was the only participant who had not been a student of Bourdelle.[80] Emile Antoine Bourdelle (1861-1929) began working in 1893 as an assistant for Rodin transposing some of his works into stone. He eventually became his chief assistant and when the Académe Rodin began in 1900 he assisted in teaching there. His style was not as impressionistic as Rodin's, rather he used stylizations influenced by archaic art.[81] Bourdelle's work was closer in style to that of Rodin than was Aristide Maillol's.

Maillol (1861-1944) turned to sculpture at the age of 40. He brought to French sculpture a renewal of classical concepts such as serenity, stability, and balance. The implied movement, agitated surfaces, and twisting forms of Rodin were replaced by smooth surfaces and closed, balanced masses. His theme was the nude female form portrayed in a non-narrative manner. Like Rodin, however, his figures had less ornamentation and detailed realism than the earlier academic neo-classical sculptures. Ritchie comments that "to the forward-looking generation of sculptors immediately

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79. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, p. 263.

80. Harkavy was also a participant in the exhibition. "Blames Public for Frog-and-Faun School," *Art Digest*, 5 (March 1, 1931), p. 7.

81. Ritchie, p. 226.

following Rodin, Maillol appeared as a healthy revolutionary come to deliver them from what they considered to be the excessive literary gesturing of the older master."[82]

Young American artists had ample opportunity to see the work of both artists without traveling overseas. Bourdelle exhibited in New York in 1925 and 1930.[83] Maillol had an exhibition at the Brummer Galleries in New York City in 1926 and again in 1933.[84] A review of the 1926 show graced the front of *Art News* and the high esteem in which Maillol was held can be seen in this critique, "this is the finest exhibition of the greatest living sculptor that America has ever seen or is ever likely to see."[85] Greenbaum, Harkavy, Margoulies, and Scaravaglione were undoubtedly familiar with Maillol's work as many of their female figures reflect his emphasis on classical values.

Both in Europe and the United States the revival of direct carving was extremely influential on sculptural styles during the first quarter of the twentieth century. In Paris, Brancusi had begun carving directly about 1907 and Robert Laurent, who is generally credited with being the first direct carver in the United States, began in 1913 to directly carve in wood and about 1920 in stone.[86] This revival was strengthened in part by the immigration of European sculptors to the United States after

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82. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

83. Ionel Jianou and Michel Dufet, *Bourdelle* (Paris: Arted - Editions d'Art, 1965), p. 56.

84. "Anson C. Goodyear Shows His Superb Collection of Maillols in New York," *Art News*, 24 (January 16, 1926), p. 1, and Waldemar George, *Aristide Maillol*, trans. Diana Imber (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, 1965), p. 230.

85. "Anson C. Goodyear Shows His Superb Collection of Maillols in New York," *Art News*, p. 1.

86. Craven, p. 556.

World War I.[87] Other early direct carvers in the United States were William Zorach, John Flannagan, Chaim Gross, and José de Creeft. Roberta Tarbell observes that they were "influential in changing the dominant style of sculpture away from academic classicism."[88] Their work was still within the strong figural tradition of American sculpture but without the emphasis on literary or narrative aspects. Instead the works became broader symbols of women, animals, and children.

Both Laurent and Zorach were influential teachers at the Art Students League beginning in the twenties and encouraged direct carving in wood and stone. Laurent was born in Brittany in 1890 and brought to America at the age of twelve by an American who recognized his youthful talent. While in his early teens he was sent to Paris to study and there he saw the twelve wood carvings of Gauguin in a retrospective exhibition at the Salon d'Automne in 1906.[89] In 1908 he studied at the British Academy in Rome. One of his first wood carvings was a bas-relief in the primitive style of Gauguin. His sculptures are generally of the nude female figure, simplified and enlarged to achieve a monumental quality. Typically the grain of the wood accents the figural form.

William Zorach was born in Lithuania in 1887 and came to the United States at the age of four. He attended night classes at the Cleveland Art School and in 1907 went to New York City where he studied painting for two years at the National

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87. Jacques Schnier, *Sculpture in Modern America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948), p. 19.

88. Roberta K. Tarbell, "Sculpture, 1900-1940," *The Figurative Tradition and the Whitney Museum of American Art*, Patricia Hills and Roberta K. Tarbell (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1980), p. 102.

89. Roberta K. Tarbell, *Vanguard American Sculpture 1913-1939*, with Joan R. Marter and Jeffrey Wechsler (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Art Gallery, 1979), p. 45.

Academy of Design. In 1910 he studied in Paris and began painting in a Cubist style. In 1917 he began sculpting, turning away from the more abstract style of his paintings. He was a strong proponent of direct carving which he expressed through his teaching and numerous writings. Female nudes, mothers with their children, or children with animals are the dominant themes of his sculptural production. He constructs his work with simplified masses around a central axis.

In his book *Zorach Explains Sculpture*, published in 1947, Zorach advocated the study of early American folk art and African sculpture. The creators of American folk art had "pride and individuality...in their work" and "primitive" art is to the modernist "like a fresh wind blowing into a warm, stifling room" offering the sculptor freedom from past traditions.[90] He also thought the study of African sculpture was valuable because the "approach...was very direct and simple and it is by a simple and direct approach that a student evolves a personal expression."[91] The study of both these styles would influence a sculptor to simplify form.

Greenbaum, Harkavy, Margoulies, and Scaravaglione employed the direct carving process but in varying degrees. Scaravaglione most often used this technique during the 1930's. Margoulies and Harkavy both modeled and carved. Greenbaum preferred modeling, although in the 1950s she also carved in stone. However, the ideas associated with direct carving influenced even those who modeled in clay. John I.H. Baur saw direct carving as a

> reaction against the prevailing romantic naturalism of the Rodin tradition. It returned sculpture to the simple, monumental forms of primitive or classical art; it insisted that the nature of the material and the sculptor's technique must play an important part in the aesthetic effect, particularly that stone sculpture

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90. William Zorach, *Zorach Explains Sculpture* (New York: American Artist Group, 1947), p. 206.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

> must look compact and stony, that it must show, at least in parts, the marks of the tool which hewed it...[92]

The direct carvers felt that sculpture of the nineteenth century emphasized subject matter to the detriment of the material. The material had to be an integral part of the subject matter, even perhaps its inspiration. The grain of wood or veining of the stone could all influence the design. Working in hard materials compelled the sculptors to see form in terms of overall mass rather than in terms of minute details. In a review of the Pennsylvania Academy's Annual show of 1934 the critic Dorothy Grafly comments on the tendencies to "return to the basically sculpturesque in form; to the simplicity and strength that comes from hewn stone or wood."[93] Even bronze, which was losing popularity as a medium, had an "austere simplicity stripped almost bare of ornament."[94] Thus, with the technique of direct carving came an aesthetic of truth to materials and simplification and abstraction of form that influenced even those who worked in the more traditional materials of clay and bronze.

Zorach stated, "Simplification is the basis of the modern sculptural style...'"[95] Reduction of detail meant that illusionism or direct transcription of forms from nature was no longer necessary and allowed the sculpture to be more personally expressive of the artist. Scaravaglione wrote, "Everyone with the feeling for sculpture expects his work to have the character of the material in which it is made. He also expects it

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92. John I.H. Baur, *Revolution and Tradition in Modern American Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 75.

93. "'Social Commentaries' Mark the Pennsylvania Academy's Annual," *Art Digest*, 8 (February 15, 1934), p. 5.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

95. Martha Candler Cheney, *Modern Art in America* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1939), p. 161.

to express himself. If it is an individual piece, not designed for a special place, it is likely to be more insistently personal."[96]

Not only did sculptors have to be true to their materials but it was critical that they do all the work themselves. The process of working with the material was important to the creative process. Jacques Schnier notes that

> Sculpture according to the proponents of this new viewpoint, was not just modeled form translated mechanically or by human machine into another material. For a carved statue to be true sculpture it had to be conceived directly into its final material and thus be instinct with the essential properties and qualities of this material. Advocates of the *taille directe* school asserted that direct carving by the sculptor resulted in a special quality - a freshness and a spontaneity - lacking in translated work.[97]

It was thought that assistants who transformed the sculpture into another material, often with the use of the pointing system, invariably marred or filtered the artist's original creative vision.

The process of direct carving and the insistence on the unaided creation of the artwork can also be viewed as a rejection or seperation from the industrial and technological breakthroughs of the twentieth century. Roberta Tarbell observes that "a desire for the dreamy reflective quality inherent in the slow process of carving hard materials was felt as a respite from the machines and speed that are so characteristic of the twentieth century."[98] There appears to have been no interest among the sculptors Zorach and Laurent and those whom they influenced in using new industrial materials. They did not follow the lead of the Futurists who advocated the use of modern materials. This decision may have been influenced by the politics of the time

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96. Scaravaglione, p. 455.

97. Schnier, p. 5.

98. Tarbell, *Vanguard American Sculpture 1913-1939*, p. 47.

as the Italian artist Fillippo Marinetti and some of his followers were seen as supporters of Mussolini and fascism.[99]

The sculptors were also not interested in machine-age topics. Images of the plane, the engine, or the skyscraper were not explored. Rather, they remained committed to figurative themes. Was this an evasion of contemporary subject matter? Maybe they perceived no aesthetic value in technology. Joshua Taylor observes that the "optimistic view that saw the city as symbol of the triumph of rationality and of transcendent progress, and treasured a belief in science and the machine as the saviors of mankind, was sustained only with difficulty in the 1930s."[100] One horrifying world war with the possibility of another on the horizon and an entire country caught in an economic depression did not lead to an optimistic view of technology. Perhaps they did not want to glorify the machine but were more interested in dealing with the impact of the industrial age on humans as it manifested itself in the plight of the laborer or miner or the victims of war.

For most American sculptors nature, simplified and abstracted, was still the dominant theme. Robert Laurent stated, "'To be good, sculpture...must combine form, personality, expression of life. The sculptor must study nature, then gradually learn to eliminate its intricate detail, retaining only the elemental qualities, the real essence of the object. When he can do this he is a genius...'"[101] The artist transforms nature into its essence, the emphasis is on transformation and expression not

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99. Margaret Duroc in her address to the American Artists' Congress criticizes Marinetti for his glorification of war and willing cooperation with Fascists in Italy. "Government in Art: Art in Fascist Italy," in *First American Artists' Congress*, pp. 72-73.

100. Joshua C. Taylor, *America as Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 219.

101. Cheney, p. 157.

just faithful transcription. The American sculptor Malvina Hoffman, a student of Rodin, wrote in 1939 that in

> recent years we have delved behind many impenetrable walls. Art, science, and mathematics have helped to reveal many secrets which were hidden to past generations, but it is certain that, regardless of progress and modern discovery and invention, the seeker for the origin and cause of things as they are will turn at last to nature for the elemental forces and unchanging wonder of life itself.[102]

Nature, especially in the form of the human figure, remained the subject of choice for the majority of sculptors.

Critics have felt that sculptural styles generally lagged behind painting styles in the early twentieth-century. For those working in three dimensions the transition to abstraction may have been more difficult. A painting, by its nature as a two-dimensional medium, is removed from the idea of reality but as Joshua Taylor observes, "Without the figure, how could one distinguish sculpture from a decorative ornament, a chair, or an architectural model?"[103]

So, a recognizable subject was still felt to be important to this generation of American sculptors despite the greater interest in formal qualities. Barbara Rose notes that

> ...an autonomous art-for-art's sake was viewed as a foreign invader liable to subvert the native American desire for a purposeful art. Abstract art was assigned the role of the villainous alien; realism was to personify the geniune means of expression. The argument drew favor in many camps: among the artists, because most were realists; among the politically-oriented intellectuals, because abstract art was apolitical...[104]

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102. Malvina Hoffman, *Sculpture Inside and Out* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1939), p. 23.

103. Joshua C. Taylor, *The Fine Arts in America* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 188.

104. Barbara Rose, *American Art Since 1900*, revised edition (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), p. 94.

William Zorach believed abstract art was missing something vital. He wrote in 1947 that a

> form acquires aesthetic meaning when it has emotional content. When this emotional content is lacking, sculptured form is cold. It becomes merely an arrangement of shapes and masses. Much abstract sculpture done today is formal and intellectual and seldom reaches the higher aesthetic expressiveness. Emotional or aesthetic content is something that is felt.[105]

Scaravaglione also believed, as did many of her peers, in the integrity of the subject of the human form. In 1947 she commented, "'On the other hand many feel that much modern art - though good in its seeking for new expression and its use of new mediums - is nevertheless lacking in the warm human element which is so necessary for the welfare of the world. It seems to be a child of the intellect, untouched by the love of the heart.'"[106] These artists were also concerned with communicating their message to a larger audience and realism was certainly more widely understood.

While style was one way for the sculptors who considered themselves modern to distinguish themselves from those in the National Sculpture Society, the other was subject matter. Rather than portraying historical or mythological figures members of the Sculptors Guild focused instead on contemporary social issues and present day rural and city life. Although a wide range of styles coexisted during the 1930s the dominant movements were those of the American Scene and Social Realism. The artists working for goverment projects were often encouraged to use the American Scene of rural and city life as their inspiration. For example, Thomas Hart Benton glorifed the virtues of rural America in his murals. However, many artists were interested in

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105. Zorach, *Zorach Explains Sculpture*, pp. 56 and 58.

106. Adelaide Kerr, "Prize-Winning Sculptor Predicts 'New Art,'" Harrisburg, Pennsylvania *Telegraph*, September 29, 1947, Archives of American Art, roll N-683, frame 538.

not only depicting the American Scene but in using their works to illustrate social problems. These problems were often those brought on by the Depression. As Joshua Taylor notes artists such as William Gropper and Ben Shahn "depicted the sad lot of the unemployed, difficulties between labor demonstrators and the police, and the plight of powerful laborers grimly working in mines or on construction projects. The byword was 'social significance,' and any work that failed to exhibit the necessary concern was considered frivolous and decadent by the socially aware."[107]

A 1934 review of the Pennsylvania Academy's Annual exhibition noted that "the force exerted by depression years on the creative viewpoint" has resulted in a predominance of subject matter showing "the human being as affected by social conditions..."[108] Artists of the time were concerned that "their work should be socially beneficial rather than remote and elitist."[109] The plight of miners was a popular theme used by both Harkavy and Margoulies. In an exhibition of prints organized by the American Artists' Congress mining is depicted by at least five of the participants.[110] Greenbaum, Harkavy, and Margoulies all created works related to the social themes of war, fascism, big business, and the plight of miners.[111] Through these sculptures they hoped to illuminate societal problems to the viewer.

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107. Taylor, *The Fine Arts in America*, p. 197.

108. "'Social Commentaries,'" *Art Digest*, 3.

109. Helen A. Harrison, "The Artists and Their Work," in *7 American Women: The Depression Decade*, Karal Ann Marling and Helen A. Harrison, p. 17.

110. *Graphic Works of the American 30's*, unabridged republication of *America Today: A Book of 100 Prints* published in New York in 1936 by the American Artists' Congress (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977).

111. For example, Harkavy created a sympathic portrayal of miners in *American Miner's Family* and Margoulies did the same in *Mine Disaster*. Greenbaum criticized fascism in *The Fascist* and the corporate world in *Big Business*.

Farming was also a popular subject. Scaravaglione created a relief in 1938, *Agriculture* (Figure 4), as a commission for the Treasury Section. The harvest of wheat is depicted, a symbol of plenty: of food and prosperity. Marlene Park observes that to "counter the fear and insecurity engendered by the Depression, the Section and the artists it commissioned adopted themes that stressed continuity with a progressive and prosperous past and provided reassurance..."[112] and "the farmer was also the model of man's role in reaping the beneficence of nature and of constancy in the midst of the rise and fall of cities and nations."[113] The postmen created by Scaravaglione and Margoulies were also symbols of democracy and the continuity of national institutions.

Accompanying the social themes are the more general ones of mothers and their children, of women and animals, or just animals. A look through the catalog of the 1939 Sculptors Guild Second Outdoor Exhibition reveals the subjects to be mainly women or animals. A 1936 review of the Whitney Biennial notes that the "mother and child theme is especially popular this year. The exhibition also has more than its share of nudes..."[114] Tarbell sees this fascination with the human figure as expressing the sculptor's "belief in - perhaps even optimism in - mankind and in human values, denying, or at least putting aside, industrialization, mechanization, and the iconoclasm professed by the futurists and others...Rather, these artists attempted to revitalize, to bring up to date, one of the most important sculptural subjects

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112. Park and Markowitz, *Democratic Vistas*, p. 47.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

114. E.M. Benson, "Exhibition Reviews," *American Magazine of Art*, 29 (March 1936)), p. 187.

throughout history."[115] It was also perhaps a reflection of the rural values of the 1930s. These sculptors still felt the sacredness of the human body and what it represented. They did not pierce and dissect it like an inanimate object. Among the four women sculptors the human figure became the predominant subject.

Dorothea Greenbaum's style is the most naturalistic of this group of four women sculptors. The world around her is the source for her work. She says, "'I am in love with nature, the stones, leaves, shells and all the marvelous living things about us.'"[116] The majority of her sculptures concentrate on the human figure and like others in the 1930s she handled contemporary themes. Greenbaum preferred modeling as her technique although in the 1950s she did do some direct carving. Even though "modeling is considered very passe...and she is constantly quarreling with her friends who want her to work in stone or wood...," Greenbaum remarked in 1940 that "'I find stone and wood terribly inelastic. I think it's almost impossible to do what you want with them unless you're a genius.'"[117]

Portraits comprise much of Greenbaum's early work. *Yas* from 1929, is of her friend the artist Yasuo Kuniyoshi. *Child with Braids*, 1929, *Josie*, 1932, and *Lizzie*, 1933 are all portraits of young girls. In 1935 she also created a bronze portrait of her son, *David* (Figure 8). The sculptures share a quiet, introspective quality. *David* contains the classical values of balance and serenity that were brought back into style with Maillol. The young boy stands in a contrapposto pose, his upper body relaxed,

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115. Tarbell, *Vanguard American Sculpture*, p. 30.

116. Beatrice Gilman Proske, "American Women Sculptors, Part II," *National Sculpture Review*, 24 (Winter 1975-1976), p. 12.

117. *Vineyard Gazette*, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, 1940, Archives of American Art, roll N-7065, frame 32.

looking downward. Perhaps Greenbaum was influenced by Donatello's *David* and Maillol's bronze, *Young Cyclist*, c. 1904 (Figure 9). They are similar in the contrapposto pose, the downward tilt of the head, and the broad style of modeling. Neither uses an excess of detail. For example, the hair is indicated by a fairly smooth mass of bronze.

Greenbaum also sculpted figures of women: *The Acrobat*, c. 1934, *Girl with Towel* (Figure 10) from 1938, and *Tiny* (Figure 1), a five-foot bronze from 1939. These figures, like *David*, reflect the classical values of Maillol with their calm, gentle qualities. Rubinstein comments that Greenbaum's works reflect her "belief in the dignity of human life..."[118]

Greenbaum turned her attention to the dominant social issues of the 1930s in two works: *Big Business* from 1933 and *The Fascist* from 1935 which she exhibited in both the 1938 and 1939 Sculptors Guild shows. *Big Business* portrays a corpulent balding man smoking a cigar. The deep folds under his eyes and heavy creases in his face express the toil his lifestyle is taking. His eyes are closed, perhaps to the pain of his workers caught in the economy of the Depression. Barbara Rose observes that the 1930s was a time of rapid change in the United States. "A predominantly rural and small town society was being replaced by the giant complexes of the big cities; power was becoming increasingly centralized in the federal government and in large corporations."[119] Art of the 1930s often depicted the power of business and its negative influence on the individual worker.

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118. Rubinstein, *American Women Artists*, p. 257.

119. Rose, p. 93.

In contrast to the peaceful mode of her female figures, *The Fascist* (Figure 11), is a forceful head of exaggerated proportions. The heavy-set balding man perhaps alludes to Benito Mussolini and would serve as a reminder to its audience of the causes of war and the growing power of fascism. Greenbaum apparently did two versions of this piece. In the 1939 Sculptors Guild exhibition catalogue is a photograph of Greenbaum working on an over life-size version.[120] The size of the head is effective in contributing to the bombastic effect. Her style and subject in both *Big Business* and *The Fascist* are similar to the Social Realism of William Gropper (1897-1977). He painted unflattering portrayals of military figures and politicians using an expressionistic style of enlarged heads with distorted features seen in works such as *The Senate* of 1935.

In style the work of Minna Harkavy reveals the expressionistic influence of Rodin and Bourdelle. The mass of *Silver Torso* (Figure 12) swells expressively in the thighs and abdomon. The surface of the form is left rough and unfinished. The work was shown in an exhibition of women sculptors at the Arden Galleries, New York in 1931. The reviewer called the women the "more noteworthy of the younger modernist group" and complimented their respect for their subject matter and materials and urges the public to update their taste in sculpture from "fauns, nymphs and babies."[121]

Harkavy concentrated her artistic efforts on the expressive possiblities of the human head. *Head of Hall-Johnson*, (Figure 13) exhibited at the Moscow Museum

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120. The photo of Greenbaum at work in the catalogue for the *Second Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*, p. 45 shows an over life-size head in clay. She also created a smaller bronze version in 1935 that was eight inches high.

121. "Blames Public for Frog-and-Faun School," *Art Digest*, p. 7.

of Western Art in 1931 was bought by the Pushkin Museum. She was the first American artist to be represented at the Moscow Museum of Western Art and as *Art Digest* reported "the first showing of American sculpture in Russia under Soviet regime."[122] Soviet workers and their art instructors viewed *Head of Hall-Johnson* and thirteen other bronzes depicting various types of American labor. "*Pravda*, the Soviet political newspaper, which seldom devotes space to art, regarded the exhibition as significant for its revelations of labor conditions in industrial America."[123] Just what those revelations are is unknown, especially as this is the only piece from the exhibit I have been able to find.

Hall-Johnson was a black composer and director of a choir of spiritual singers. The head is elongated and the face sculpted in large masses without much naturalistic detail. His head rests gently on his hand as if he were listening to music. As with many of her other sculptures the transitions from shoulder to arm to hand are abrupt rather than smooth.

While in Paris in 1932, Harkavy created a portrait of Leo Stein, the brother of Gertrude Stein. Sixteen years later, in a 1948 review of the Whitney Annual *Leo Stein* (Figure 14) was singled out as "one of the most modern works here...the sculptor presents a personal image of nature. The balance between the ovals in eyebrows, ears, lips, and folds of flesh was planned essentially as sculpture."[124] Harkavy is complimented for her personal expressionistic interpretation and formal qualities. The subject is not idealized, he is balding with bags under his eyes. The

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122. "Bought by Russia," *Art Digest*, 6 (March 1, 1932), p. 32.

123. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

124. Thomas B. Hess, "Pity the poor sculptor," *Art News*, 47 (March 1948), p. 21.

eyes stare at the viewer with a concentrated gaze. The creases in the cheek are handled with texture so they almost appear as gashes in the facial surface. This work seems most like that of Bourdelle in its modeled surface. Her later works take on a smoother surface with less naturalistic proportions.

Harkavy portrayed her friend the journalist Carlo Tresca (1879-1943) in a bronze sculpture that stands in the Carlo Tresca Plaza in Sulmona, Italy with the inscription "'Socialist - Exiled Martyr of Liberty.'"[125] Both Harkavy and Tresca were anti-fascists who protested the policies of Mussolini.[126] After numerous attempts on his life Tresca was shot in New York City, probably by fascists.

Harkavy generally worked in cast materials like bronze or cast stone. *New England Woman* (Figure 15) is made of cast stone. The marks of the tools are left in the surface of the shoulder in the tradition of Rodin and the later direct carving school. The face and neck are expressively elongated with the nose formed from simple planes. The bust has an inward melancholy feeling. The piece was exhibited at the 1939 World's Fair in New York City.

Harkavy comments on the influence of the direct carving school in a statement from 1947. She writes that the artist "selects his material or object to be portrayed, he confines it within the limitations of his medium governing himself by a knowledge of the esthetics of his medium..."[127] Texture is important to Harkavy's work, as well

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125. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, p. 267.

126. Harkavy lived with Tresca in the early 1930s while still married to her husband Louis Harkavy. See Dorothy Gallagher, *All the Right Enemies: The Life and Murder of Carlo Tresca* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1988), p. 121.

127. Yiddisher Kultur Farband, *One Hundred Contemporary American Jewish Painters and Sculptors*, essay by Louis Lozowick (New York: Publication of Art Section, Yiddisher Kultur Farband, 1947), p. 80.

as simplification of mass and large planes of space. In her bronzes the mold marks are often visible.

Two of Harkavy's sculptures most likely deal with her response to World War II. *"My Children Are Desolate Because the Enemy Prevailed"* (Figure 16) was exhibited in the 1939 Sculptors Guild *Second Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*. *Martyr* was shown in the 1942 *Sculpture of Freedom* exhibition at Rockefeller Center. *"My Children Are Desolate Because the Enemy Prevailed"* comes from a verse in the Old Testament book of Lamentations: chapter I, verse 16. The sculpture shows the half-figure of a mother and child. The mother gently touches the child with an expression of sadness and despair on her face. The elongation and simplication of the planes of the faces allows the viewer to concentrate on the facial expression. In contrast to her somber face the figure of the mother is an image of strength expressed through the broad mass of her torso. Rubinstein interprets the figure as possibly referring to the spread of Nazism in Europe.[128]

Martyr is carved in plaster. Harkavy utilizes the surface of the medium in an expressionistic manner creating a rough uneven gashing texture to the normally smooth skin of the face. The expression is anguished as if a terrifying and painful event has etched itself upon the person.

American Miner's Family (Figure 17) is a bronze in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art through which Harkavy shows her sympathy with the miners' plight. To Rubinstein the "ovoid, primitivizing forms and elongated heads seem influenced by Modigaliani and African art."[129] The weariness and stoic character of

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128. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, p. 266.

129. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

both the mother and father can be felt in the deeply carved lines. The faces of the children lack this elongation and are not as successful in their expressive nature. A review from 1936 notes that the "children are too cherubic and not sufficiently individualized to be convincing."[130] Brancusi may also be a possible influence. The line from the nose into the eyebrows is reminiscent of his heads from earlier in the century such as *Sleeping Muse* from 1910. The forms are closed and solid with simple repetition of textures used to enhance and define the surface of the hair and the mother's clothing.

Like Greenbaum, the female figure dominates the sculpture of Berta Margoulies, although her style reveals a greater simplfication and abstraction of form. Her early works were most likely portrait heads of young girls.[131] *Tempered*, a bronze exhibited in 1936 at the Art Institute in Chicago, is rendered fairly naturalistically with some simplification of form in the face. Many of her later works are carved in stone and become more abstract, reflecting the influence of William Zorach with whom she became friends.

Maternity, shown in the first Sculptors Guild exhibtion in 1938, was carved from a block of Tennessee pink marble which she shared with Zorach. A photo from the first Sculptors Guild exhibition in 1938 shows Helen Keller touching the sculpture.[132] It depicts a pregnant woman with her arms folded protectively over her womb. The sturdy and solid mass of the figure is swelled emphasizing her fertility.

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130. Benson, p. 188.

131. For example see *Dale* in Jack C. Rich, *The Materials and Methods of Sculpture* (1947; reprint. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), plate 12B. Although no date is given the naturalistic style may indicate it is an early work.

132. See roll D-263, frames 507-508, Archives of American Art.

Evidence of carving is left at the bottom. *Young Girl* shown in the 1941 Sculptors Guild exhibition echoes these same forms.

Later Margoulies returned to her earlier modeling style. Rubinstein notes that as an expressionist she preferred clay and bronze over the stone of direct carving.[133] Like the other sculptors Margoulies believed in the integrity of the medium and the artist's personal expression translated through that medium. She did not believe, however, that purely formal works could communicate her message. In a letter to Rubinstein in 1983 Margoulies spoke of not being able to keep her artistic integrity and switch to total abstraction and thus went through "'the agony of all artists of conscience who would not go with the five yearly change of style or fashion.'"[134]

In a 1947 artist's statement she wrote,

> The progressive artist is not content with creating satisfying plastic forms only. As a participating and functioning member of society, he has something to say as well as an individual way of saying it. Always if the work is to be truly plastic, it must contain the basic plastic requirement - that the idea be molded by the composition of the forms, nature of the material and the personal expression of the artist.[135]

As a member of society, Margoulies felt, the artist had to communicate some kind of meaningful message not just an aesthetic experience.

Margoulies dealt with contemporary social themes in two of her sculptures: *Refugees* (Figure 18) and *Mine Disaster* (Figure 19). *Refugees* depicts a mother with her arm protectively wrapped around the child that leans against her. The simplified blocky masses, carved from stone, express strength and endurance as does Harkavy's

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133. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, p. 264.

134. ***Ibid.***, p. 265.

135. Yiddisher Kultur Farband, p. 130.

"My Children Are Desolate Because the Enemy Prevailed". The piece most likely refers to the displacement of persons begun by World War II or the Fascist regimes in Italy and Germany. The sculpture was shown in the 1939 Sculptors Guild exhibition.

Mine Disaster is a bronze from 1942, now in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art. In this work Margoulies shows concern and sympathy for the families of miners working in dangerous conditions. In contrast to the rounded forms of her earlier sculptures she employs sharp angular planes. Margoulies admired Käthe Kollwitz and the angular forms may reflect her influence.[136] Perhaps Margoulies was also affected by the impassioned portrayals of weavers by Kollwitz in her series of prints, *The Weaver's Uprising* from 1895-97. The fence of *Mine Disaster* echoes and emphasizes the geometry of the arms and elbows. The faces are simplified into broad sections with the line of the nose extended to the eyebrows and back down to the cheek to create sharp planes in the face itself. The flat planes and diagonals convey the tension and anguish of those waiting for news of the mine disaster.

Margoulies's government commissions are more traditional in style. For *Colonial Foot Postman*, 1936 (also called *Postman 1691-1775*) her brother served as her model. As mentioned earlier she was one of the winners in a national competition held by the Treasury Section of Fine Arts for commissions of postal workers to be placed in the Post Office Department Building in Washington, D.C. She did four other works under government patronage. A head of *Andrew Jackson*[137] and a terra

136. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, pp. 264-265.

137. Yiddisher Kultur Farband, p. 130.

cotta relief called *Tomato Culture* for Monticello, Arkansas are among them.[138] This type of work, although not stylistically or thematically innovative was praised by some critics. A 1935 review of government commissions in Washington D.C., praised *Colonial Foot Postman* as a "solidly modelled work of much individuality" and the critic felt the utilization of American subject matter would aid the development of an American style.[139]

Concetta Scaravaglione's sculptures are of the female figure often accompanied by animals or children. To her, the direct observation of the human figure is important. She writes that as a young person, "I credit those days, when the chances to observe people were both close and inexhaustible, with whatever sense I have of the body, its movements and the human meaning of those movements."[140] Baur calls Scaravaglione a romantic realist which he believes is the "dominant strain in our art from about 1925 to at least the end of the 1930's."[141] His definition of romantic realism is "realism slightly modified by various formal devices for more expressive and romantic effect. . .based on a philosophy of art which held that only those distortions were justified which intensified truth..."[142] He also felt Greenbaum fit in this category.

Like the other sculptors Scaravaglione created portrait heads early in her career. *Anne* is a portrait of a young girl and *Vincent Canadé* (Figure 3) is a portrait of the

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138. Park and Markowitz, *Democratic Vistas*, p. 202.

139. Inslee A. Hopper, "America in Washington," *American Magazine of Art*, 28 (December 1935), pp. 722 and 723.

140. Scaravaglione, p. 452.

141. Baur, p. 95.

142. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

painter who, like Scaravaglione, was Italian. *Vincent Canadé* is portrayed unsparingly with his receding hairline and deep wrinkles under the eyes and in the cheeks. He is depicted in a quiet meditative, moment. This work is unlike Scaravaglione's later sculptures which become more idealized and classical in form.

Although schooled in the United States some of her sculpture appears to be influenced by Maillol. *Mother and Child* (Figure 2) from 1934 is composed of full-length figures of a seated mother and her son. The sculpture won the E. Widener Memorial Gold Medal in the 1934 Pennsylvania Academy's Annual show. The mother affectionately touches the child's hair. The simplification is evident in the solid mass of the hair with no indication of individual strands. Unlike the expressionistic texture of Rodin the surface of the work is smooth. Maillol's *Mediterranean* (Figure 20), depicting a seated female figure, also has a smooth finish and the pose is similar enough between the figures to safely assume Scaravaglione was aware of the piece. The position of the legs with one bent on the ground and the other vertical is identical. Scaravaglione has raised the arms of the mother to allow interaction with the child. As Maillol exhibited his works in 1926 and in 1933 at the Brummer Gallery in New York City Scaravaglione would have had the opportunity to see his work. A 1939 review calls Scaravaglione "one of the numerous legitimate progeny of Maillol..."[143]

Torso, which was shown in both the 1938 and 1939 Sculptors Guild's exhibitions, also displays many of the same qualities as the 1934 *Mother and Child*. While the life-size figure is realistically rendered it is devoid of detailed ornament. Instead the figure is composed of large smooth planes and radiates a calm meditative quality.

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143. Rosamund Frost, "Sculpture in the Open Again," *Art News*, 37 (April 22, 1939), p. 11.

In these works there is no elongation of form or utilization of sharp dramatic planes of space as there is in the sculpture of Margoulies and Harkavy. Ralph Pearson writes that her works "have the massive, universalized, impersonal form of classic art. Eminently, all belong within the classic tradition which our leader-moderns are carrying on."[144]

Scaravaglione's style changes when she works in wood and stone and seems to more directly express the influence of Robert Laurent, with whom she studied, and William Zorach. The forms are simpler and more massive. She employs texture to define spatial areas and form. This influence is reflected in an essay Scaravaglione wrote in 1939 in the *Magazine of Art*. She says, "We all agree on certain requirements for sculpture...Everyone with the feeling for sculpture expects his work to have the character of the material in which it is made. He also expects it to express himself."[145]

Group (Figure 21), from 1935 (also known as *Two Women*) is carved from mahogany. It is in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art. One woman is seated while the other helps comb or arrange her hair. Scaravaglione employs texture to define the woman's cascading hair and the block upon which she is seated. The figures are united by the arm of the seated woman flowing into the arm of the standing woman. Roberta Tarbell finds in the piece many of the stylistic and technical devices of American direct carving. "The block is unpierced by voids, and smooth polished surfaces...contrast with textured areas patterned with curved-chisel

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144. Ralph M. Pearson, *The Modern Renaissance in American Art* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1954), p. 272.

145. Scaravaglione, p. 455.

marks...Softly rounded or squarish limbs and forms were used, and jagged or sharply angular angry forms were excluded."[146]

Many sculptors hoped their work could be an integral part of public architecture and become part of the life of a community. This idea was illustrated in a 1937 article in the *Magazine of Art* entitled "Architecture, Art, Life." A group of mural painters, architects, and six sculptors designed a model for a community center for the performing and visual arts to be exhibited at the 1939 World's Fair. Scaravaglione's work *Mother and Child* (Figure 22) was to be a modern caryatid. The model for the caryatid is carved from teakwood and she has elongated the figures. The reviewer, F.A. Gutheim, saw the model for the community center as a "new relationship between architecture and the arts, and between art and life."[147]

Some of Scaravaglione's work under government patronage is the typical sculpture of postal workers and agricultural themes. However, much of what she created follows her own established themes of the female figure accompanied by another human being or an animal. *Girl with Gazelle* (Figure 6) was lent by the WPA/FAP to the Sculptors Guild Outdoor show of 1938. This was an extremely popular piece appearing on both the cover of *Newsweek* and *Art Digest*. Holger Cahill calls the work a "free sculpture" meaning its subject was up to the sculptor but it was designated for an outdoor area such as park, garden, or courtyard of a building.[148] The sculpture is over life-size and made of cast stone with the original model being made of plaster.

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146. Tarbell, "Sculpture, 1900-1940," p. 104.

147. F.A. Gutheim, "Architecture, Art, Life," *Magazine of Art*, 30 (May 1937), p. 307.

148. Cahill, *New Horizons*, p. 37.

Scaravaglione also designed the fourteen-foot *Woman with Mountain Sheep* (Figure 5) in 1939 for the garden court of the Federal Building at the New York World's Fair. Unfortunately only a smaller plaster model remains. Either this theme was requested or was just popular as Margoulies created a piece for the same court called *Woman and Deer.* Possibly the garden court site played a part in the selection of woman and animals as Margoulies commented about her piece, "'I wanted something that had to feel garden. I couldn't think of anything more garden...than a woman with a deer.'"[149] The fourteen-foot size would create a monumental effect, especially as a photo from 1939 (Figure 23) shows the work elevated on a base and set within a shallow niche.[150]

Woman with Mountain Sheep is constructed using simple, massive forms. There is no detail in the clothing except some stylized folds and the overall finish is smooth and polished. The figure is calm and serene, she is not voluptous but strong. This effect is reinforced by the solid mass of the figure with no open areas. It is not a portrayal of human fragility. In 1939 Cheney may have been commenting on this quality of strength when she wrote, "Concetta Scaravaglione has been for several years one of the outstanding women among modern sculptors in this country. She has made noticeable gains in recent years in the direction of boldness and vitality; and there is in her present work a quality more often found in men's work."[151]

The figure is not allegorical in contrast to the sculptural motifs of eighteenth and nineteenth-century America. She is not a goddess or the representation of a specific

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149. Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors*, p. 264.

150. Scaravaglione, p. 453.

151. Cheney, p. 161.

virtue but perhaps represents an idealized view of humans in harmony with nature. The animals Scaravaglione selects to place with her figures are wild rather than domestic. *Girl with Gazelle* communicates the same serene qualities as *Woman with Mountain Sheep*. A fawn rests quietly in the lap of a young girl. A review of her first one woman show in 1941 comments that her sculpture "combines sensitivity with strength..."[152]

As with Margoulies's sculpture for the Post Office Department, Scaravaglione's *Railway Mail Carrier, 1862* from 1936 uses a style that is more naturalistic. *Agriculture* (Figure 4) is more simplified and abstracted. The relief is part of the series "Americans at Work, Past and Present" and is situated above a door at the Federal Trade Commission building in Washington, D.C. There were four panels in the series: *Industry* by Chaim Gross, *Shipping* by Robert Laurent, and *Foreign Trade* by Carl Ludwig Schmitz which depicted the ivory trade in Africa. *Agriculture* symbolically illustrated the trade in wheat. Each of the panels has two figures and is carved in relief in a limestone panel 12 feet by 7 feet. James Goode sees a reflection of the Art Deco style which was "popular when the building was constructed in 1937. All of these panels reflect the geometric rigor and mundane reality typical of art in the Depression years."[153] The style and theme are also typical of the Regionalist works of the 1930s by Thomas Hart Benton and John Steuart Curry that portray rural subjects in a heroic manner.

Within the horizontal panel Scaravaglione has shown the importance of both men and women in agriculture. The lower torsos of the figures are mirror images of

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152. "Concetta Scaravaglione's First One-Man Show," *Magazine of Art*, 34 (April 1941), p. 213.

153. James M. Goode, *The Outdoor Sculpture of Washington, D.C.* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974), p. 146.

each other. There is a strong repetition of angles created by the arms and legs and the diagonal of the wheat is echoed by the angle of the legs closest to the viewer. The forms are monumental, they do not depict a specific person but a generalized and glorified worker. The panel depicts the forces of life: man, woman, and wheat heads bursting forth with giant kernels. Scaravaglione enjoyed the challenges of designing sculpture for architecture. She comments, "My experiences with architectural sculpture have given me a great desire to do more of it. Such work is healthy and strengthening. It broadens the outlook. And from it one learns much about eliminating unconstructive details."[154]

Although Scaravaglione was concerned about who would see her work she did not create any sculptures that dealt directly with contemporary social problems as did Greenbaum, Harkavy, and Margoulies. She wrote, "Nor do I concern myself with those mighty problems some of which, I suspect, make better literature than sculpture...If it becomes easier to go to a meeting and to settle the affairs of the world than to face the stone at the moment when it threatens to go wrong, one goes to the meeting."[155] She felt her work has a social function, even if it had no explicit social theme.

Joshua Taylor observes that the artist of the 1930s wished to be seen as a part of society and began to advocate social change through art and to operate "in a broader social context than before."[156] Rockwell Kent wrote in 1936 that the American Artists' Congress "is looked upon by its adherents as distinctly a modern movement, an

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154. Scaravaglione, p. 455.

155. *Ibid.*, pp. 454-455.

156. Taylor, *The Fine Arts in America*, p. 192.

attempt by the artists of a highly organized industrial age to end that carefree 'rugged individualism' of theirs which has become such an anachronism in modern society."[157] Greenbaum, Harkavy, Scaravaglione, and Margoulies demonstrated their agreement with this view by their participation in the New York Society of Women Artists, the Sculptors Guild, and the American Artists' Congress. As professional artists they were motivated to gain more visibility for sculpture and for women artists. Through their membership in the American Artists' Congress and the employment of contemporary social themes they protested war, fascism, and the desperate plight of the worker.

Although little has been written about Greenbaum, Harkavy, Margoulies, and Scaravaglione they were an integral part of the sculptural scene of the 1930s. They strove for a serious evaluation of professional women artists through their activities with the New York Society of Women Artists. Greenbaum, Harkavy, Margoulies, and Scaravaglione united with a diverse group of sculptors in the Sculptors Guild to create increased exhibition opportunities and accomplished this goal by bringing their art to the public in highly successful outdoor shows. The simplification of overall mass in their sculpture reveals the moderate influence of early twentieth-century European movements. However, like most artists of the 1930s they rejected a more abstract style and chose to continue with the human figure depicted in a realistic manner. As did other artists of the 1930s, the four women sculptors hoped their works could be integrated into the everyday life of the community. They achieved this through their sculptural style and participation in Sculptors Guild exhibitions and government art projects. The strength and serenity of their sculptures express a faith

157. Rockwell Kent, "Kent Protests," *Art Digest*, 10 (April 15, 1936), p. 14.

in the goodness of humanity despite the pessimism created by World War I, the Depression, and the events leading to the second world war. Through their activities in various organizations and especially through their art Greenbaum, Harkavy, Margoulies, and Scaravaglione communicated that hopeful message to others.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Dorothea Greenbaum, *Tiny*, 1939, bronze, 5' high.

Figure 2. Concetta Scaravaglione, *Mother and Child*, 1934, plaster.

Figure 3. Concetta Scaravaglione, *Vincent Canadé*, 1927, bronze, 11 1/2" high.

Figure 4. Concetta Scaravaglione, *Agriculture*, 1938, limestone relief, 12' x 7'.

Figure 5. Concetta Scaravaglione working on *Woman with Mountain Sheep*, 1939, 14' high, photo from *Magazine of Art*.

Figure 6. Concetta Scaravaglione, *Girl with Gazelle*, c. 1936, cast stone.

Figure 7. Concetta Scaravaglione, *Young Girl Reading*, c. 1936.

Figure 8. Dorothea Greenbaum, *David*, 1935, bronze, 36" high.

Figure 9. Aristide Maillol, *Young Cyclist*, c. 1904, bronze, 38" high.

Figure 10. Dorothea Greenbaum, *Girl with Towel*, 1938, plaster, 5'6" high.

Figure 11. Dorothea Greenbaum working on *The Fascist*, photo from *Second Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*, 1939.

Figure 12. Minna Harkavy, *Silver Torso*, c. 1931.

Figure 13. Minna Harkavy, *Head of Hall-Johnson*, bronze.

Figure 14. Minna Harkavy, *Leo Stein*, 1932, bronze, 12" high.

Figure 15. Minna Harkavy, *New England Woman*, 1939, cast stone, 19 1/2" high.

Figure 16. Minna Harkavy working on *"My Children are Desolate Because the Enemy Prevailed"*, plaster, photo from *Second Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*, 1939.

Figure 17. Minna Harkavy, *American Miner's Family*, 1931, bronze, 27" x 23" x 19 3/4".

Figure 18. Berta Margoulies working on *Refugees*, sandstone, photo from *Second Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*, 1939.

Figure 19. Berta Margoulies, *Mine Disaster*, 1942, bronze, 23" x 29 1/2" x 12 1/2".

Figure 20. Aristide Maillol, *Mediterranean*, c. 1901, bronze, 41" high.

Figure 21. Concetta Scaravaglione, *Group*, 1935, mahogany, 24 1/2" x 10 1/2" x 10.

Figure 22. Concetta Scaravaglione, *Mother and Child*, c. 1938, teakwood.

Figure 23. Concetta Scaravaglione, *Woman with Mountain Sheep*, photo from *Magazine of Art*.

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