

Herakles the Archer (3687.1)  
Gift of Mrs. Stanley N. Barbee, 1970  
bronze

GAL 42 / France  
1909  
Gallery 2/

ARTIST: Emile Antoine Bourdelle (1861-1929). Bourdelle was taught to value fine workmanship and respect the beauty of raw materials by his father, a cabinetmaker; his uncle, a stonecutter; and his grandfather, a weaver.

He won a scholarship to Ecole des Beaux Arts in Toulouse at the age of 15 with a bust of Ingres. Ingres and Bourdelle were both from Montauban, France. In 1885 at the age of 24 Bourdelle went to Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. He worked as chief assistant to Rodin and was for many years his friend and companion.

At his death Bourdelle had completed 900 sculptures.

SUBJECT: Herakles, Greek hero and personification of physical strength and courage. Bourdelle often took his themes from Greek mythology and for this work he chose Herakles, the most popular hero of Greece. He used as a model the magnificent athlete-soldier Doyen-Parigot who insisted he use another model for the head. It was said to be inspired by the archer on the temple of Athens at Aegina (now in Munich).

MEDIUM AND TECHNIQUE: Bronze. There were 49 casts made from 5 small studies of the Archer. The Academy Herakles is the fifth version of which 10 casts were made. There are two versions of the large figure (100" x 96") which were cast 18 times.

STYLE: Herakles, the Archer, is a modern image of a legendary exploit. It transcends the myth and emphasizes the power of man.

Physical strength is emphasized in the deliberate exaggeration of the size of the body compared to the head. The profile of the face is sharp and determined. The straining figure holds the bow taut. There is extreme tension in both the gesture and the muscular effort. This is increased by the opposing lines of force acting against each other. The thrust of the arm and leg encounter the resistance of the bow and the vertical rock. The head is directly above the right knee of the twisted straining figure giving it a feeling of stability. The right arm creates the only horizontal line in a composition of diagonals.

The slender bow (with the string left to the imagination), arms and legs of this figure take advantage of the strength of the metal.

Herakles the Archer (#3687.1) card 2

GAL 2

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS: (Herakles - Greek; Hercules - Roman).

Questions for discussion:

1. How did the sculptor show strength and power?
2. Could this sculpture have been made of another material?
3. How tall is the bow compared to Herakles?
4. What expression is shown on the face?
5. What clues are there that this is Herakles?

Compare to other sculpture in the room as to surface treatment.

If students have seen the Hercules relief in the courtyard a comparison can be made.

Posing as the Archer is successful with young children.

*Emile Antoine Bourdelle (French 1861-1929)*  
*"Heracles the Archer," 1909*  
*bronze, height 31"*  
*Gift of Mrs. Stanley N. Barbee in memory*  
*of her husband, Mr. Stanley*  
*N. Barbee, 1970*



Attention is called to the bronze sculpture of "Heracles, the Archer" by Emile Antoine Bourdelle (French, 1861-1929) now being shown in Gallery 2. This intermediate size version of Bourdelle's most noted work is loaned by Mrs. Stanley N. Barbee as a future gift to the museum in memory of her husband, whose interest in the Academy is evident in a number of contemporary American paintings he gave before his death in 1968.

NEW ACQUISITIONS