

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 224

FOR RELEASE:
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MAJOR LEHMBRUCK SCULPTURE ACQUIRED FOR GALLERY'S TWENTIETH CENTURY COLLECTION

WASHINGTON, D. C. June 13, 1974. The last and perhaps greatest work by Wilhelm Lehmbruck (1881-1917), one of the principal sculptors of the early twentieth century, has been acquired by the National Gallery of Art. Entitled Seated Youth ("The Friend"), the sculpture is currently on view in gallery 71.

The newly-acquired work, purchased through the Andrew W. Mellon Purchase Fund at the May meeting of the Board of Trustees, is "the most important twentieth-century sculpture to enter the Gallery's collection" said J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery, in making the announcement.

Seated Youth ("The Friend") was one of the major works in the Gallery's special exhibition of Lehmbruck sculpture in the spring of 1972. The Gallery's acquisition is the original plaster cast of the work and is signed and dated by the artist. Reinhold Heller, the noted Lehmbruck authority, called the Gallery's Seated Youth "by far the finest cast of the figure in existence."

Begun in Berlin and finished in the spring and summer of 1917 in Zurich, this major work (40 3/4" x 30 1/4" x 45 1/4") is a profound statement of Lehmbruck's tragic view of the war and its influence on art and men. This last work represents, as Heller

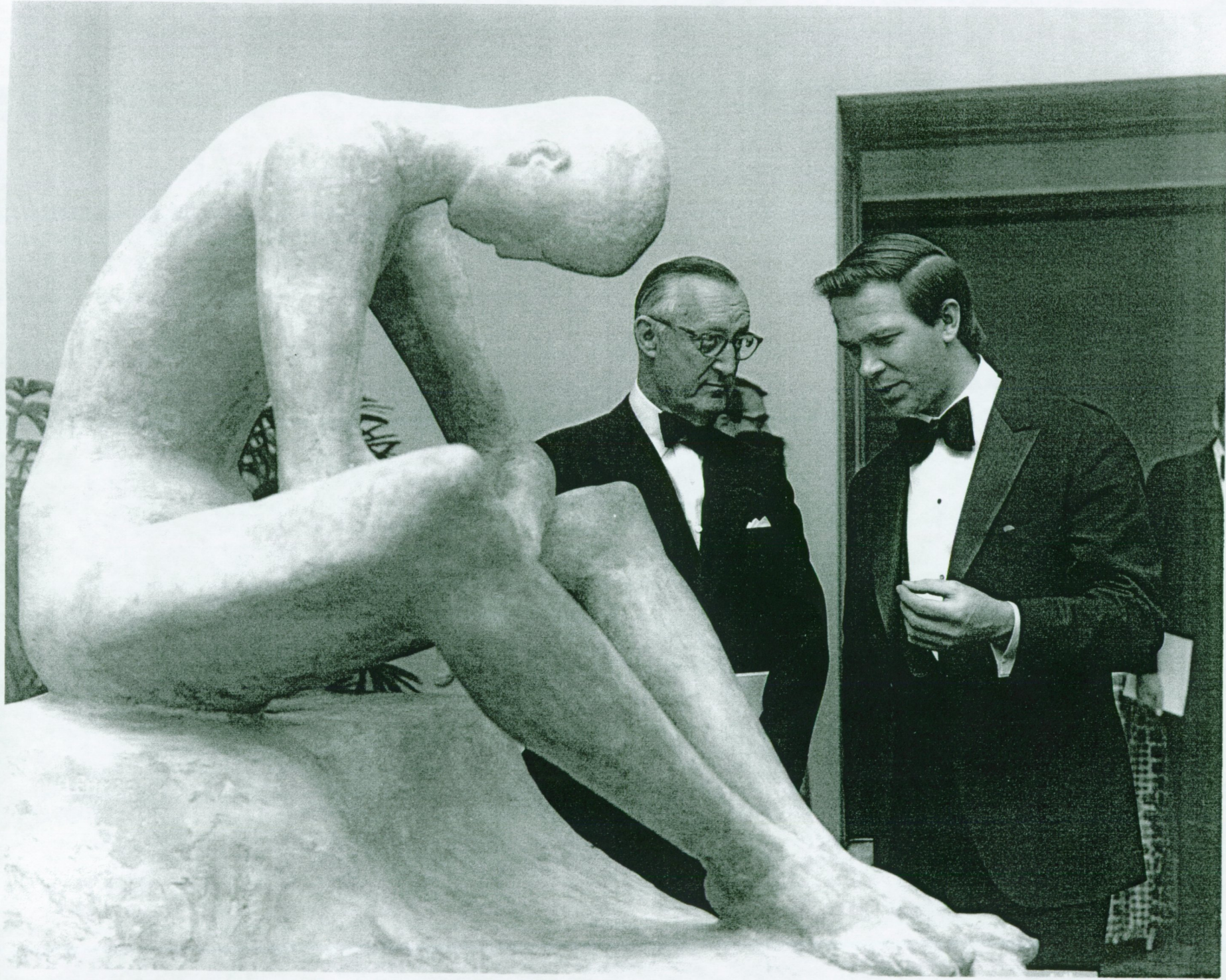
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explains, "an independent sculptural creation (that) reaches an extreme never again attained by him." The figure, with its tense, angular human geometry and tubular limbs, conveys the grieving, despairing feeling that Lehmbruck himself felt as an artist. This feeling is intensified by the figure's linear quality, with the arms resting on his knees, creating a sculptured space that appears to overwhelm the body.

The Gallery's Seated Youth was acquired from the collection of a private dealer in Kiel, Germany, who purchased it from the Walter Chrysler Collection in 1971. Previously, it was in the collections of Curt Valentin, New York, and the Buchholz Gallery, Berlin. In July, 1937, the piece was declared "degenerate" by the Nazis who confiscated it from the Städtische Kunsthalle in Mannheim and showed it in their "Entartete Kunst" exhibition in Munich. Boehmer, Hitler's chief aide, later sold it for \$35. It had earlier been in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Falk, friends of Lehmbruck and the subject of many of his portrait busts.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, or Pamela Jenkinson, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. 20565. area code 202, 737-4215, ext. 224.



Scan of photocopy of photograph. Photocopy of photograph is located in the Press Release files.



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Mr. Paul Mellon, President of the National Gallery, and Douglas Lewis, the Gallery's Curator of Sculpture, discuss Lehbruck's Seated Youth ("The Friend"), recently acquired by the Gallery, at the reception to preview the Gallery's special exhibition The Art of Wilhelm Lehbruck May 20, 1972.

Wilhelm Lehbruck (1881-1919)
Seated Youth ("The Friend")
Original composite tinted plaster
40 3/4" x 30 1/4" x 45 1/4"
Andrew W. Mellon Purchase Fund

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