

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART PRESENTS
WORKS BY ALEXANDER ARCHIPENKO FROM THE TEL-AVIV MUSEUM

TITLE: Alexander Archipenko: A Centennial Tribute

WASHINGTON - The National Gallery of Art will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Alexander Archipenko (1887 - 1964) with an exhibition containing 42 of his sculptures, paintings and drawings, the majority of which have never been shown in the United States. Many of the works are from the Tel-Aviv Museum, which co-organized the exhibition and holds the finest collection of the Ukrainian-born artist's early works. The exhibition will be on view in the National Gallery's East Building, Nov. 16, 1986 - Feb. 16, 1987.

Alexander Archipenko's status as a major figure in early 20th century sculpture is based largely on the innovative works he produced during his years in France and Germany (1909 - 1923). This exhibition will bring together for the first time the most significant of Archipenko's critically acclaimed early works.

As a leading figure of the cubist movement, Archipenko is recognized for his revolutionary approach to form, material and color. By merging painting with three-dimensional construction, he produced works that embraced not only the visual influences of cubism, but also those of Italian futurism and classical sculpture. His method of opening up the plastic form with holes and concavities created a new idiom in modern sculpture. By the time he moved to the United States, he had already exhibited throughout Europe and in North America and was considered by many to be the greatest living sculptor.

(more)

When Archipenko left Europe most of the works from his French (1908 - 1921) and German (1921 - 1923) periods remained in the hands of collectors. When the Nazis assumed power, Archipenko's art in Germany was officially declared "degenerate" and many works were subsequently seized and destroyed. By the end of World War II only a limited number of early sculptures were still known to exist.

Fortunately, a major collection of works from Archipenko's early years was stored in the Tel-Aviv Museum. The sculptures had been sent to the museum in 1933 by the German collector, Erich Goeritz, who had them shipped to Tel-Aviv for safekeeping. The Goeritz collection now represents the largest and most important remaining group of Archipenko's early sculpture.

Among the works in this exhibition are Woman at Her Toilet (1916), a three-dimensional "sculpto-painting;" Two Women (1920), a work previously assumed lost, now in the National Museum, Belgrade; Boxing (1914) and Statue on Triangular Base (1914), two works from the Goeritz collection; Architectural Figure (1950), a painted wood sculpture from Archipenko's American years and Cleopatra (1957), a monumental work from the artist's final years.

Jack Cowart, curator of 20th century art at the National Gallery of Art, has coordinated the exhibition with guest curator Katherine Janszky Michaelsen, New York, and Nehama Guralnik, curator of European and American art at the Tel-Aviv Museum. A fully illustrated catalogue with essays by Michaelsen and Guralnik will accompany the exhibition. After leaving the National Gallery the exhibition will be on view at the Tel-Aviv Museum, March 12 - June 13, 1987. It is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

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