



MACCONNAL - MASON

ESTABLISHED 1893



Arthur Eric Rowton Gill (1882-1940)

Eve

Conceived *circa* 1928-30

Caen Stone

Height, 10½ in – 26.7 cm

This recently discovered figure is believed to have been produced purely for Gill's own enjoyment. He is known to have depicted two other figures in a similar pose, one conceived in 1928, also entitled Eve and carved from Bath stone, is housed at Tate Britain, while the other, entitled "Chloe" (1930) is in the collection of the University of Texas, Austin.

Both figures have folds of drapery around their legs; the Tate Eve has allowed the fabric to slip to the lower part of her legs, with her arms behind her back, staring directly at the viewer. The more demure "Chloe", which was a commission for writer and publisher Leonard Woolf, husband of Virginia, attempts to hold the fabric in place whilst, Madonna like, averts her gaze.

As Dr. Judith Collins notes, 'The identity of this delightful figure is not known, but the execution date seems to hover around 1928-30', which would be in keeping with both the Tate "Eve" and Austin "Chloe". What is beyond doubt, however, is the serene beauty of the present work, conveying conflicting elements of purity and eroticism with a tangible sense of innocence.

Provenance:

Private Collection, UK

Artist description:

Arthur Eric Rowton Gill born in Brighton on 22nd February 1882 was to become a hugely influential sculptor, wood engraver, draughtsman and calligrapher, one whose influence is still seen today.

Gill studied at Chichester Art & Technical School before being apprenticed to an architect in London 1900-1903. Whilst studying architecture, which bored him, Gill attended classes in stonemasonry at Westminster Technical College and in calligraphy at the Central School of Arts & Crafts. It was sculpture

and calligraphy that were to prove his metier.

In 1904 Gill married Ethel Hester Moore (1878-1961) and in 1907 moved to Ditchling in Sussex where he developed an interest in Catholicism and turned to sculpture. In 1911 he held his first one man show at the Chenil Galleries in London and in 1914 was commissioned to produce two sculptures for Westminster Cathedral. The same year he exhibited with William and Cecily Marchant's Goupil Gallery, the beginning of a fruitful relationship.

Following the First World War Gill, with his followers including Hilary Pepler (1878-1951), Desmond Chute (1895-1962) and David Jones (1895-1974) founded 'The Third Order of St. Dominic', a guild of Catholic craftsmen based in Ditchling.

In the spring of 1922 Gill sculpted 'Divine Lovers' in box wood and then cast this in an edition of six in pewter, two of which are now in museums.

Gill and his household then moved to Capel-y-ffin near Abergavenny before moving to High Wycombe in 1928.

That same year he was commissioned to sculpt a series of three reliefs for the London Electric Railway Company's building at 55 Broadway, St. James's in London, and in 1932 a group of works for BBC's Broadcasting House in Portland Place - works that provide a lasting legacy. In 1937 Gill was elected an Honorary Associate of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. He exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1939 and 1940 and posthumously in 1941, a drawing of fellow sculptor Aristide Maillol by Gill was exhibited.

Eric Gill was highly influential on his peers and on subsequent generations, he was highly regarded by his contemporaries and close friends, including Sir Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) and Sir William Rothenstein (1872-1945).

He designed a number of typeface's including Perpetua and worked under Edward Johnston (1872-1944) on London Underground designs. He was a remarkably fine wood engraver, draughtsman and sculptor. An artist whose colourful life and beliefs were integral to his work.

Eric Gill died November 1940 at North Dene, High Wycombe.

His works can be found in museums in: Cardiff; Edinburgh, The Scottish National Gallery; London, British Museum, National Portrait Gallery and Tate Britain; Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago; Cleveland and New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.