

Lanleff - Demeure No. 4 1961

Henri Etienne-Martin (French, 1913-1995)

cast bronze

The Art Institute of Chicago,

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold H. Maremont

Collection of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park

2003.01

Born in Loriol sur Drôme, France, in 1913, Henri Etienne-Martin was educated at the School of Fine Arts in Lyon where he studied sculpture from 1929 until 1933. He worked alongside artists such as Constantine Brancusi and Alberto Giacometti.

During various periods, his diverse approaches to sculpting utilized materials such as wood, bronze, string, plaster, and textiles.

Lanleff-Demeure No. 4 was originally sculpted in plaster in the artist's studio. The organic quality of the surface texture is a result of the artist having worked directly in the wet material with his hands. Once the plaster model was completed, it was sent to a foundry, where it was cast in sections in bronze. Those sections were then arranged and welded together to create the sculpture the viewer experiences today.

This work is an example of the artist's mature style. Beginning in 1954, he created a series of sculptures which use the title "*demeure*" as a unifying agent. *Demeure* can be translated as "house." It seems as though the artist meant to imply the group was representative of different "dwellings" which made some sort of impact on him during his life.

The "Lanleff Temple," from which the piece derives its title, is an ancient structure of obscure origin in Brittany. The temple's ruined stone walls rise at a gentle angle as they curve. This sculpture echoes that structure in the upward thrust of its stair-like forms. Illustrating classic strategies of surrealist abstraction, the shapes which cap the sculpture seem to shift from a defensive parapet to figures in supplication, while the central core appears and disappears as the viewer circles the artwork.