

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: VISUALIZING AMERICAN HISTORY AND  
IDENTITY IN THE ELLEN PHILLIPS  
SAMUEL MEMORIAL

Abby Rebecca Eron, Master of Arts, 2014

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In her will, Philadelphia philanthropist Ellen Phillips Samuel designated \$500,000 to the Fairmount Park Art Association “for the erection of statuary on the banks of the Schuylkill River ... emblematic of the history of America from the time of the earliest settlers to the present.” The initial phase of the resulting sculpture project – the Central Terrace of the Samuel Memorial – should be considered one of the fullest realizations of New Deal sculpture. It in many ways corresponds (conceptually, thematically, and stylistically) with the simultaneously developing art programs of the federal government. Analyzing the Memorial project highlights some of the tensions underlying New Deal public art, such as the difficulties of visualizing American identity and history, as well as the complexities involved in the process of commissioning artwork intended to fulfill certain programmatic purposes while also allowing for a level of individual artists’ creative expression.

VISUALIZING AMERICAN HISTORY AND IDENTITY IN THE ELLEN  
PHILLIPS SAMUEL MEMORIAL

By

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## INTRODUCTION

The January 14, 1914, edition of *The Washington Herald* includes “A Record of America’s Gifts and Givers for the Year 1913,” which describes the earliest formulation of the Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial:

*One of the most original gifts of the year was made by Mrs. Ellen Phillips Samuel, of Philadelphia, who left \$500,000 to the Fairmount Park Art Association for the erection of statuary on the banks of the Schuylkill River in Fairmount Park. The statues are to be emblematic of the history of America from the time of the earliest settlers to the present, the designs to be furnished by sculptors obtained by advertising in the leading newspapers in the world.<sup>1</sup>*

Three sculpture terraces, North, Central, and South, situated approximately one mile northwest of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, represent the outcome of Samuel’s original bequest. In the most complete overview of the Samuel Memorial Project as a whole (the final sculpture was not dedicated until 1961), current Executive Director of the Association for Public Art – the re-named Fairmount Park Art Association – Penny Balkin Bach proposes that the memorial is “a monument to confusion about what constituted modern public art” as much as it is “a tribute to

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<sup>1</sup> “A Record of America’s Gifts and Givers for the Year 1913,” *Washington Herald*, July 14, 1914, Library of Congress “Chronicling America: Historical American Newspapers,” [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov). The Fairmount Park Art Association Annual Report (hereafter: FPAA Annual Report) 1914, 15-17 summarizes the parameters of the bequest and the Board’s resolution to “carry out, to the best of its ability, the wishes of the testatrix,” 17. The finances: The Annual Report estimated the value of Samuel’s residuary estate “conservatively” at \$500,000. FPAA Annual Report 1914, 15. By the beginning of the decade, the Treasurer’s Report totaled the value of the Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial Fund as \$709,227.69. FPAA Annual Report 1931, 39. By the middle of the decade, the Treasurer’s Report totaled the value of the fund at \$665,740.90, divided between the following categories: U.S. Liberty Loans and Treasury Notes, State and Municipal Bonds, Industrial Bonds and Stocks, and Cash. FPAA Annual Report 1936, 39.

Mrs. Samuel's unprecedented generosity."<sup>2</sup> Rather than representative of the centuries of American history it strove to memorialize, Bach concludes that the Samuel Memorial is better described as "emblematic of [the] period of turmoil and transition" of the approximately three decades during which it was created.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis hones in on the 1930s, the decade of the initial phase of the Samuel Memorial project, to analyze some of the factors that may have resulted in such a "monument to confusion." The Fairmount Park Art Association's records reveal the Samuel Memorial Committee grappling with many of the issues typical of New Deal public art – the difficulties of visualizing American identity and history, and the complexities involved in the very process of commissioning artwork intended to fulfill certain programmatic purposes while also allowing for a level of individual artists' personal expression and creativity. Despite its private funding, the Samuel Memorial project in many ways corresponds (conceptually, thematically, rhetorically, stylistically, and in terms of actors involved) with the simultaneously-developing art programs of the United States federal government. In fact, the stability of the Samuel Memorial's private, philanthropic funding source allowed the Central Terrace to become one of the fullest realizations of what we could call "New Deal sculpture."

### ***An Overview of the Central Terrace***

Though Samuel's will designated the funds for the Memorial in 1907, they were held until the death of her husband in 1929.<sup>4</sup> This paper focuses on the initial

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<sup>2</sup> Penny Balkin Bach, *Public Art in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 94.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

phase of the sculpture project, a phase that essentially corresponds to today's Central Terrace, minus Jacques Lipchitz's *The Spirit of Enterprise* (1953-60) (Figures 1-3), a later addition. This initial phase of the Samuel Memorial project concluded at the end of 1940, by which point six sculptures by six different artists had been completed and installed in the Central Terrace. The oblong layout of the Terrace groups the sculptures into two clusters – the South Exedra, made up of Robert Laurent's *Spanning the Continent* (1937, installed 1938), John B. Flannagan's *The Miner* (1938), and J. Wallace Kelly's *The Ploughman* (1938); and the North Exedra, composed of Maurice Sterne's *Welcoming to Freedom* (1939), Heinz Warneke's *The Immigrant* (1940), and Hélène Sardeau's *The Slave* (1940) (Figures 4-9).

*Spanning the Continent* and *Welcoming to Freedom* are the largest of the six sculptures (9'2" and 13'4" high, respectively, with approximately 3' bases). Besides their size, their medium also distinguishes them from the rest. Cast in bronze, rather than carved in stone, they sit on pedestals atop grassy rectangular plots, which articulate their partial autonomy. *Spanning the Continent* and *Welcoming to Freedom* stand centrally in their corresponding exedras, approximately semicircular architectural enclosures featuring shallow benches with high-reaching back walls inscribed with titles and quotations selected by the Memorial Committee. The architect, Paul Cret, extended the sides of both exedras with lower walls ornamented by Neoclassical balustrades and finished at each end with 5'6" columns that serve as pedestals for the remaining four sculptures, thereby integrating Kelly's, Wallace's, Warneke's, and Sardeau's pieces more closely with the Terrace's architectural

surround. The coloration of these statues' limestone medium nearly matches that of the architecture, furthering this sense of structural continuity.

Dorothy Grafly, the art critic most consistently involved with reporting on the Samuel Memorial in the 1930s, criticized elements of Cret's highly symmetrical, formal, and "period in style" architecture for the site, and she also raised key concerns that resonate with much New Deal art. Before the Committee undertook the selection of sculptors for the Central Terrace, Grafly expressed wariness over the limitations imposed by Cret's design:

*Through the acceptance of an overwhelmingly architectural treatment of the river bank site the Samuel Memorial Committee automatically narrows its choice of sculptors to such men as show their ability to adapt their idea to the ideas of others. Whether or not genuine creative spirit can be so limited remains perhaps the most unanswerable of the many problems.<sup>5</sup>*

She extended her concern for limitations on "creative spirit" to the circumscriptions of the Memorial's American historical program itself. As her commentary on the Samuel Memorial recurs, it is worth noting from the outset that at least one member of the Samuel Memorial Committee saw her reportage as inherently tainted by the fact that the Fairmount Park Art Association had rejected an earlier design by her father, the sculptor Charles Grafly, for the overall layout of the Memorial (Figure 10).<sup>6</sup> At one point, the Committee Secretary Henri Marceau diminished Grafly's

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<sup>5</sup> Dorothy Grafly, "Sculpture at Philadelphia: The Samuel Bequest," *The American Magazine of Art* 26 (1933): 408.

<sup>6</sup> A mock-up of Charles Grafly's design can be found before the first page in FPAA Annual Report 1916. FPAA Annual Report 1934 states architect Edgar V. Seeler and Grafly designed "continuous lanes of two terraces with balustrades in cut stone and metal. The result was not entirely satisfactory and Mr. Samuel liked it so little that the Association made no further effort for some years," 17.

statements, with perhaps some gender prejudice, as “stupid and of course considerably biased.”<sup>7</sup>

### *New Deal Sculpture*

Scholars generally use the term “New Deal art” as shorthand for any fine art produced under the auspices of a handful of programs funded by the United States government during President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s terms in office: the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP, 1933-34), the Treasury Department’s Section of Painting and Sculpture, later called the Section of Fine Arts (Section, 1934-43), the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP, 1935-39), and the Federal Art Project (FAP, 1935-43).<sup>8</sup>

This list of programs reveals obvious chronological correspondences between what is generally categorized as New Deal art and the sculpture filling the Central Terrace of the Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial. The initial phase of the Samuel Memorial project officially started with the 1933 Sculpture International (the first of three), an exhibition held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art that organizers meant to expose the Samuel Memorial Committee members to a range of artists from which they would select six for the Central Terrace commissions.<sup>9</sup> This show ran from May

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<sup>7</sup> Henri Marceau to Robert Laurent, June 3, 1938, Fairmount Park Art Association Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA (hereafter: FPAA), Box 126, Folder 2.

<sup>8</sup> Some also use it to refer to photographs and posters made under other agencies, including the Resettlement Administration, Farm Security Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and National Youth Administration. See the National New Deal Preservation Association, [http://www.newdeallegacy.org/art\\_projects.html](http://www.newdeallegacy.org/art_projects.html), and the New Deal Art Registry, <http://www.newdealartregistry.org/Home.html>, for two contemporary organizations’ variable understandings of the parameters of New Deal art.

<sup>9</sup> R. Sturgis Ingersoll, “The Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial,” in *Sculpture of a City: Philadelphia’s Treasures in Bronze and Stone* (New York: Walker Publishing, 1974), 252.

to September, 1933, closing just three months before the government implemented the first of its New Deal art projects, the PWAP. The competition model of the Sculpture International mirrors the procedures of Section commissions, as does the process that followed of contracting artists and paying them in three installments.<sup>10</sup> Unlike the Sculpture Internationals, however, Section commission competitions called for entries responding to specific proposals and claimed to be anonymous.<sup>11</sup> Yet the majority of Section commissions actually did not result from competitions directly. As Richard D. McKinzie explains, “it was not so important to win a competition as to enter one and make an impression on the Section staff,” because more than twice as many artists received Section work not based on winning outright but based on the merit of their designs.<sup>12</sup> Grafly commended the Samuel Memorial Committee’s competition process, stating, “choosing a sculptor on the basis of general ability offers a new and hopeful turn.”<sup>13</sup> The reality of competitions in the case of Section commissions and Samuel Memorial commissions seems at odds with the New Deal priority of simply employing Americans during the Great Depression.

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<sup>10</sup> When the work was first commissioned, when it was half complete, and finally when the Procurement Division approved after installation. Richard D. McKinzie, *The New Deal for Artists* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 54.

<sup>11</sup> Artists suspected that those judging Section competitions could distinguish who submitted what based on style. Unlike the government art projects, the Samuel Memorial competition was not even superficially anonymous. However, Philadelphia’s *Public Ledger* newspaper did hold a straw poll during the Sculpture International, and members of the public could cast their votes for favorite artists. Balkin Bach, 97. The Committee selected none of the people’s choices, but the voting process itself arguably gave the Samuel Memorial project an additional “democratic” veneer, even beyond that of Section commission competitions. Ingersoll describes the Committee’s oversight on the Samuel Memorial Project as such: “A principle which we religiously followed was that of giving the sculptor the theme and then letting him interpret it without interference by the committee . . . We did, however, reserve the right to reject a sculptor’s development,” 251. The following pages elaborate on the actual level of interference and cooperation that took place.

<sup>12</sup> McKinzie, 54.

<sup>13</sup> Grafly, “Sculpture at Philadelphia,” 407.

The “back to work” initiative was one that the FAP, as a true relief program, responded to more directly than the Section ever did.

Of all the New Deal art programs, the FAP, under the Works Project Administration (WPA), produced the most art and sponsored the most artists, including an incredibly diverse range of sculpture and sculptors.<sup>14</sup> Even the title of this program, “Federal Art Project,” hints at its greater inclusivity. However, scholarly analyses of New Deal art often focus instead on Section work. While assessing the Section as “essentially conservative in that it preserved the notion of the artist as entrepreneur who contracted for a particular job,” Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz find “in the workings of the Section all the grand ideals of the New Deal applied to government art patronage and to the creation of public art.”<sup>15</sup> Barbara Melosh, whose book *Engendering Culture* provides a sophisticated analysis of gender in New Deal art and theater, similarly deems Section art the most representative. She explains, “the Section’s more focused cultural intentions [than those of the FAP] make it the ideal subject for an inquiry about art, ideology, and audience.”<sup>16</sup> She adds that the Section’s records are also more intact and thus more available for research.

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<sup>14</sup> McKinzie writes, “the range of media and subjects in FAP sculpture almost defied description,” 118. For an overview of the diversity of FAP sculpture in one region, see Eleanor Carr, “New York Sculpture during the Federal Project,” *Art Journal* 31 (1972): 397-403. Illustrating examples such as José de Rivera’s reduced, abstract, aluminum *Flight* (1938), Carr makes an argument for the responsiveness of American FAP sculptors to the European avant-garde and proposes that FAP production in fact foresaw post-war abstract developments in the U.S.

<sup>15</sup> Gerald E. Markowitz and Marlene Park, “New Deal for Public Art,” in *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy*, ed. Harriet F. Senie and Sally Webster (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 136.

<sup>16</sup> Barbara Melosh, *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in Public Art and Theater* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 5.

Whether FAP, Section, or other, New Deal art has become synonymous for many with mural art. However, New Deal art was never constituted exclusively or even predominantly of murals, and artists created a great deal of sculpture throughout all the New Deal's fine arts agencies. The parameters of New Deal sculpture would be better defined had Forbes Watson, technical director of the PWAP, consultant to the Section, and leading New Deal art spokesmen, completed either the anticipated second volume of his and Section Director Edward Bruce's *Art in Federal Buildings (Volume I: Mural Designs*, was published in 1936) or the book on New Deal sculpture for which the Carnegie Endowment advanced him \$6,000.<sup>17</sup> Erika Doss cites a number of 18,000 sculptures produced between the FAP and the Section, though her estimate clearly encompasses smaller reliefs and three-dimensional work of all sizes, not only monumental, public work.<sup>18</sup> Within this still-broad category of New Deal sculpture, commentators again usually hold up Section art as the most representative, and one example in particular – Michael Lantz's *Man Controlling Trade* (dedicated 1942). These two, seven feet tall and nearly identical limestone statues depict heavily muscled, shirtless men harnessing rearing horses (Figures 11-12). The pair, erected to the north and south of the rounded, eastern corner of the triangular Federal Trade Commission building in Washington DC, resulted from the largest sculptural competition ever held in the United States and received so much public attention that the *Washington Herald* proposed that Lantz's figures would

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<sup>17</sup> Volume One of *Art in Federal Buildings* tantalizingly promised “to publish further volumes which shall fully illustrate sculpture models, [and] installed sculpture...” Quoted in McKinzie, 182.

<sup>18</sup> Erika Doss, “Images of Work in 1930s American Art,” *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 24 (2002): 250, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1504189>.

become as identifiable with DC as Trafalgar Square's lions are with London.<sup>19</sup> Not only receiving attention at the time, these monuments have maintained their status as prime examples of New Deal sculpture. Writing in 1991, Melosh picks out *Man Controlling Trade* as “embod[ying] the ideology of the New Deal and expos[ing] a preoccupation with masculinity characteristic of the era.”<sup>20</sup> This preoccupation is also quite evident, and will be explored, in the case of the Samuel Memorial sculptures.

The Treasury Department awarded Lantz \$45,000 for this commission, which is an amount greater than the Fairmount Park Art Association awarded any individual sculptor of the Samuel Memorial Central Terrace, but not as great as the commissions for the Central Terrace combined, which totaled approximately \$48,000. This economic weighing in part accounts for why the initial phase of Samuel Memorial project can be seen as a comprehensive embodiment of New Deal sculpture. Furthermore, almost no other group of New Deal sculpture rivals the number of large-scale, permanently installed sculptures consolidated in the Central Memorial Terrace.<sup>21</sup> This is due chiefly to the restrictions and uncertainties of funding that always shadowed the federal art projects. For one, the Section limited its sculptural

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<sup>19</sup> McKinzie, 67. The Smithsonian American Art Museum has a mock-up of Lantz's design in its collection, and describes the widely promoted “Apex Competition.” <http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=14289>.

<sup>20</sup> Melosh, 87.

<sup>21</sup> The exception I have come across is Edgar Miller's concrete sculptures for the Animal Court of the Jane Addams Housing Project in Chicago, which have fallen into disrepair and are in the process of being restored and relocated to Chicago's Roosevelt Square. However, Miller's many animals constitute more of an inventive children's playspace than sculptural program. Moreover, despite the formidable size of Lantz's sculptures, the viewer cannot take in both at the same time due to their stationing. This renders *Man Controlling Trade* more decorative additions to the government building's architecture than would be possible had they been configured otherwise.

commissions to 300 because the cost of production (materials, transportation, and time) was so much greater than that of murals and other two-dimensional work.<sup>22</sup> It follows that higher cost entailed greater risk for damaging negative publicity such as that brought to bear on Heinz Warneke's roundly criticized eagle sculptures for the Social Security building, which the Treasury ultimately sold to an automobile distributor for .005% of their cost to the country.<sup>23</sup> From the very beginning, Director of the FAP Holger Cahill was keenly aware of the tentative future of his program, the funding for which rode on the fate of its umbrella organization (the WPA) and the vicissitudes of presidential and congressional favor.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, cuts in 1937 and 1939 rocked the FAP before it and all other government art programs ultimately disbanded by 1943.<sup>25</sup>

Removing the Samuel Memorial Central Terrace from scholarly isolation and involving it in the story of New Deal art is not only truer to historical reality, it also helps fill in our understanding of New Deal sculpture, its challenges, and its meanings.

### *New Deal Style*

The following chapters look more deeply into themes, beliefs, and styles represented in the six Central Terrace sculptures, but some more introductory

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<sup>22</sup> McKinzie, 67.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. For a fuller account of the incident, see Mary Mullen Cunningham, *Heinz Warneke (1895-1983): A Sculptor First and Last* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 87-93.

<sup>24</sup> McKinzie, 84.

<sup>25</sup> Besides McKinzie's well-researched and clearly-organized book, which I use heavily in this introduction, another solid account of New Deal art is Belisario R. Contreras, *Tradition and Innovation in New Deal Art* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1983).

comments can be made about New Deal art before delving into greater specificity. Park and Markowitz describe the “conflicting values [that] shaped public art in the 1930s” in terms of government-funded art, and such “conflicting values” also animate the Samuel Memorial project.<sup>26</sup> They include, for example, “the desire for quality in art and the commitment to make art democratic.”<sup>27</sup> Because the Samuel Memorial project was designed to be emblematic of the history of America, it is aligned with a major concern of New Deal art. Park and Markowitz explain, “New Dealers expected that the art projects would help create a national culture.”<sup>28</sup> They propose that New Deal artists were remarkably united in their belief in progress, and that the art they produced tended to present “the arrival of the European” as “unquestionably the greatest event in North American history.”<sup>29</sup> This framing of the American historical narrative and prizing of progress are also at work in the Samuel Memorial project.

Melosh encompasses the stylistic proclivities of New Deal art concisely, writing: “Section art eschewed both the conservative tendencies of so-called academic art – work based in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century traditions of historical paintings – and the avant garde of abstraction. It aimed squarely for the artistic center, endorsing a representational style updated with modernist gestures.”<sup>30</sup> Artists as well as administrators called this middle-road “painting Section,” and recognized that it fostered neither the best nor the worst of artists’ output. The concept of “painting Section” echoes Grafly’s comment that the sculptors best suited

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<sup>26</sup> Park and Markowitz, “New Deal for Public Art,” 138.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>30</sup> Melosh, 7.

for the Samuel Memorial Commission were those who “show their ability to adapt their idea to the ideas of others.” Indeed, five of the six commissioned for the Central Terrace also did work for the federal art projects in some capacity, and four for the Section specifically.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the Samuel Memorial Committee worked within similar stylistic boundaries as those described by Melosh, between “conservative

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<sup>31</sup> Kelly served as supervisor for the Sculpture Division of the FAP in Pennsylvania. Joan M. Marter, “Developments in American Abstract Sculpture During the 1930s,” in *Vanguard American Sculpture 1912-1939* ed. Marter, Roberta J. Tarbell, and Jeffrey Wechsler (Rutgers: Rutgers University Art Gallery, 1979 exhibition catalog), 132. Under the auspices of the WPA, he also sculpted *Labor (Unskilled)* (1933-36), which was displayed in the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s 1940 Sculpture International. Balkin Bach, 220.

Robert Laurent produced a relief entitled *Transportation of the Mail* for the Garfield, New Jersey post office and a limestone relief entitled *Shipping* (1938) for the Federal Trade Commission building (same building as Michael Lantz’s *Man Controlling Trade*). Heinz Warneke’s commissions for the Section included *Express Man* (1936), an aluminum figure for the Post Office Department Building (now the Federal Building in Washington, DC), *Tumbling Bears* (1938), a sculpture for the National Zoological Park, and *Lewis and Clark* (1939), a sculpture for the Department of the Interior. Maurice Sterne’s centrality to federal art projects will be expanded upon below, but he both served on Section juries, and painted *Man’s Struggle for Justice* (1941) for the Department of Justice, which incited some controversy. For an explanation of the controversy, see McKinzie, 61-63. Hélène Sardeau made three terra cotta reliefs for the Greenfield, Massachusetts post office called *Planting*, *Mother and Child*, and *Reaping* (1941). She was also married to George Biddle, credited as the originator of the idea for U.S. support of artists during the Depression. This list draws from the Appendix: Inventory of Section Murals and Sculpture of Melosh, an update on Park and Markowitz’s inventory from their *Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984). It is supported by a number of online databases that are imaging and cataloguing New Deal art.

The only artist not involved in the federal art projects among those commissioned for the Central Terrace was John Flannagan. His published letters reveal, however, that Edward Rowan, head of the Section, had approached him to enter a Section competition. Perhaps disingenuously, Flannagan replied to Rowan’s solicitation, “I can only say regretfully that however certain I personally might be of a capacity for architectural sculpture, my entire work so far, has been perforce, designed for other and perhaps humbler purposes. So I do not think any photos I could send would impress a committee (as advisory committees go)...” *Letters of John Flannagan* (New York: Curt Valentin, 1942), 41. The Fairmount Park Art Association contacted the artist approximately ten months later informing him of his selection for the Central Terrace. Had the FPAA contacted Flannagan earlier, perhaps he would have been more encouraged to submit for a Section competition. His demurring likely also relates to his embattled psyche; he suffered from depression, alcoholism, and rounds of difficult surgeries during this period. Additionally, Valentin writes that essentially Flannagan’s “conception of art was opposed to the so-called monumental style. ‘There are miniature monuments,’ he used to say, alluding to the average statue expressing hero worship, ‘And there are monumental miniatures,’ meaning the work he was striving for,” 11.

tendencies” and “the avant garde of abstraction,” as they aimed to stay true to the donor’s wish for figurative embodiments of U.S. history while also embracing some aspects of a more modernist point of view.

Two examples secure “avant garde” and “conservative” as the bounds of the Committee’s taste: Jacques Lipchitz’s *Spirit of Enterprise* (1950-60) and Einarr Jónsson’s *Thorfinn Karlsefni* (1920). The Lithuanian-born, French sculptor Lipchitz (1891-1973) participated in the 1933 Sculpture International. In her review for *The American Magazine of Art*, Grafly categorized his work as among “the most abstract” of the entire show.<sup>32</sup> Entry checklists show Lipchitz, or his gallerist, entered pieces entitled *Man with Guittare* and *Girl with Braid*, sculptures that could correspond to, or be other casts of, two pieces presently in the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s collection, *Sailor with Guitar* (1914) and *Woman with Braid* (1914) (Figures 13-14).<sup>33</sup> Modeled after members of Majorca, Spain’s fisherman community, the fractured and angular forms of these sculptures display a deep engagement with Cubism, reinforced by the sailor’s guitar, which points to Pablo Picasso’s experiments in three-dimensions such as his paperboard, wire, and string *Guitar* of

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<sup>32</sup> Grafly, “Sculpture at Philadelphia,” 407.

<sup>33</sup> Exhibition Checklist, FPAA, Box 117, Folder 1. While this pairing of sculptures is most natural as they were produced in near succession, *Man with Guitar* could also refer to any number of sculptures that Lipchitz made before 1933. See cat. 112-114, 140-143, 149-153, 170-173, in Alan G. Wilinson, *The Sculpture of Jacques Lipchitz: A Catalogue Raisonné Volume One: the Paris Years 1910-1940* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996). Michael R. Taylor contends that *Woman with a Braid* was the very first Lipchitz sculpture displayed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, but not until the 1940 Sculpture International exhibition. Taylor, “Jacques Lipchitz and Philadelphia,” *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin* 92 (2004): 16, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/i293575>. However, the 1933 Sculpture International checklist and Grafly’s two reviews prove otherwise. Grafly acknowledges that “economic stress” limited the representation of European sculptors in the show to those with examples already in the U.S., but Lipchitz numbered among those represented. Grafly, “Sculpture in Competition,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 22, 1933, 10, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

1912-13 (Figure 15). The Committee embraced Lipchitz in the decades that followed, as his celebrated commission for *The Spirit of Enterprise* shows (Figure 16). But as far as the 1930s Committee correspondence reveals, the members never even raised Lipchitz's name for consideration during the first phase of the Samuel Memorial project.<sup>34</sup> Lipchitz's stylistic discontinuity with the rest of the Central Terrace's sculpture – the Art Association moved *The Spirit of Enterprise* to the center of the Central Terrace in 1986 in order to provide greater visibility than that available in its original location on the Memorial's North Terrace – visibly demonstrates the Committee's, and Philadelphia's, evolving taste.

Jónsson's (1874-1954) conservative form marks the opposing end of the Committee's 1930s taste. The three terraces of the Samuel Memorial divide American history into three periods, and then subdivide each period into two major themes, each corresponding to an exedra. While fulfilling Ellen Phillips Samuel's wish for "statues ... emblematic of the history of America," the Samuel Memorial Committee dramatically departed from the donor's intentions in determining the layout for these terraces.

Ellen Phillips Samuel's will specified a rather straightforward, traditional, and orderly memorial program, with sculptures placed "(100) feet apart, on high granite

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<sup>34</sup> By this point, Lipchitz's style had also changed to be more bulbous and organic, and viewers would understand its still-referential abstraction as far less radical in the context of the 1940s and 50s versus than that of the early 30s. I venture to propose that Lipchitz found inspiration for *Spirit of Enterprise* in a photograph of industrial Philadelphia, depicting a foundry worker atop a cast-iron eagle in 1900 (Atwater Kent Museum, Philadelphia). This photograph was later reproduced as the frontispiece in Philip Scranton and Walter Licht, *Work Sights: Industrial Philadelphia: 1890-1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986). Thematically, Lipchitz's *Spirit of Enterprise* recalls New Deal art, suggesting that the Samuel Memorial project can not only be considered a quite full example of New Deal sculpture, but also a lasting one.

pedestals of uniform shape and size ... arranged in chronological order.”<sup>35</sup> During his lifetime, her husband Joseph Samuel initiated what he thought would be the beginning of his wife’s memorial sculptural program by commissioning a bronze statue of the Icelandic explorer Thorfinn Karlsefni by Jónsson, an Icelandic artist trained at Copenhagen’s Royal Academy (Figure 17).<sup>36</sup> This statue, an identifiable historical personage, stern, severe, powerful, upright, forward-looking, and raised in isolation on a 5’7” square granite base, embodies a conservative and academic tradition of heroic monumental sculpture. After Joseph Samuel’s death, the Association essentially disregarded the Karlsefni statue and legally sidestepped the will’s specifications in its revised plan for the Samuel Memorial.

This move to modernize the Memorial program did not go unnoticed. In a letter to the editor of Philadelphia’s *Public Ledger*, Frank Samuel (presumably, a Samuel-family descendant, though he does not identify himself as such) criticized the Fairmount Park Art Association for straying so far from the original plan. Cret’s architectural setting for the sculptures had little to do with the evenly spaced granite pedestals described in Ellen Samuel’s will. Frank Samuel wrote, “the base now ... is absolutely not in accord with the will or intention of Mrs. Samuel ... I am writing this letter to show how little the wishes of the dead are respected when it comes to legacies or intentions.”<sup>37</sup> Despite objections, the Committee’s plan went forward, and its distance from the original was heralded on many fronts. In a particularly

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<sup>35</sup> FPAA Annual Report 1914, 15.

<sup>36</sup> Balkin Bach, 94.

<sup>37</sup> Frank Samuel, *Public Ledger*, undated clipping, ca. 1933, FPAA, Box 118, Folder 8. Frank Samuel’s criticism of the Fairmount Park Art Association echoes the debates that raged in recent years over the relocation of the Barnes Foundation to Philadelphia’s Benjamin Franklin Parkway from Merion, Pennsylvania.

celebratory account, an *Evening Bulletin* art critic praised the fact that “the old idea of a Sieges Allee, like the funeral row of Teuton conquerors in Berlin’s park, was put aside and in place thereof may come beautiful, symbolic, groups of figures.”<sup>38</sup> While Cret’s terrace may have been “Renaissance” or “period” in character (as described by Grafly), its very formulation reflects an impulse to modernize the overall Memorial program.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, the sculptures that adorn the site incorporate distinctive “modernist gestures,” particularly in the artists’ simplification of forms and reductive archaism. At least in the landscape of Philadelphia’s public art, the sculptures of the Central Terrace could not be mistaken for monuments of any earlier decade.

### ***The Subject Matter of the Sculpture and Inscription for the Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial***

Having done away with the original plan, the Memorial Committee consulted with Dr. Hartley Burr Alexander, a professor of philosophy.<sup>40</sup> The committee saw Alexander as a qualified expert, not only because he published on the necessity of art for democracy, but also because he had already been involved in a similar project, having collaborated with the architect on the Nebraska State Capitol (1920-32) to determine the inscriptions and decorations to adorn the interior and exterior of that

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<sup>38</sup> “Men and Things,” *Evening Bulletin*, June 2, 1933, FPAA, Box 118, Folder 9. Dorothy Grafly uses the same Sieges Allee comparison in her article on the 1933 show, “Sculpture at Philadelphia,” 407.

<sup>39</sup> Perhaps Grafly’s characterization of Cret’s work as “Renaissance” is itself unfair. David B. Brownlee makes an argument for the modernity of Cret’s classicism. *Building the City Beautiful: The Benjamin Franklin Parkway and the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1989 exhibition catalog).

<sup>40</sup> Charles Borie to Roland Taylor, President of the Fairmount Park Art Association, July 29, 1932, FPAA, Box 119, Folder 4. The Committee first consulted with historian John Bache McMaster, who proposed the three-part historical division.

building (Figure 18).<sup>41</sup> The Committee built off of and modified Alexander's proposal, and the result of their formulations is most fully articulated in a document entitled, "The Report of the Committee, As Adopted by the Trustees, on the Subject Matter of the Sculpture and Inscription for the Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial."<sup>42</sup> The Fairmount Park Art Association published this document in its Annual Report of 1934 and provided it to each commissioned artist in a portfolio with his or her contract.<sup>43</sup> The report construes the Central Terrace of the Samuel Memorial as devoted to the history of America in the nineteenth century, and it offers specific prompts for each element. Robert Laurent's prompt begins, "The Colonial period is over and we push west."

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<sup>41</sup> See Hartley Burr Alexander, "Art and the Democracy," *International Journal of Ethics* 29 (1918): 63-87, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2377378>.

<sup>42</sup> FPAA, Box 126.

<sup>43</sup> See John B. Flannagan Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

## THE SOUTH EXEDRA

***Embodying the Comradely Ideal: Robert Laurent's Spanning the Continent***

Robert Laurent's (1890-1970) *Spanning the Continent* consists of a pair of figures, male and female, who strides westward and guide a simple, circular wheel between them (Figure 4, 19). Rather than balanced in such a way that could be perceived as enabling further movement, the wheel seems to have descended into the pedestal, counteracting the sense of movement the composition otherwise suggests. Laurent orientated *Spanning the Continent* to be seen from the center of the Terrace. Approached in this direction, the woman is foregrounded and the man, taller and more massive, stands prominently behind. The pair looks out and to the West, the woman's body situated so that her torso faces forward but her head and legs are in profile. The man's pose is more comfortable, his bare torso further oriented in the direction of his gaze and step. While his muscle-mass indicates strength, the man's hands appear to only rest on the outer edges of the wheel, not propelling it forward. With slightly more active energy, the woman pushes on the inner edge of the wheel with her left palm, her wrist bent upward. In her other hand she stabilizes the end of an ax which rests, slightly submerged (like the wheel), on *Spanning the Continent's* base, its handle rhyming with the diagonal stretch of her more extended right leg (Figure 20). The woman's dress and attributes identify the group as a classic frontier couple (Figure 21). Her bonnet, long sleeves, buttoned bodice, and ankle-length skirt essentially replicate the costumes of, for example, Bryant Baker's *Pioneer Mother* (1929) in Ponca City, Oklahoma and the standing female figure in Section artist E.

Martin Henning's mural *The Chosen Site* in Van Buren, Arkansas (1940) (Figures 22-23). The similarity of the sculptors' and painter's renditions of frontier women's habiliment reveals the conventionality of depicting pioneer garb and suggests its widespread recognizability.

Both figures of *Spanning the Continent* are barefoot, despite the implication that they are traversing the rugged outdoors. Other New Deal art examples of barefoot pioneer women also exist, such as in Section sculptor Sidney Loeb's *Pioneer Family* and *First Harvest* reliefs in Royal Oak, Michigan (1938), images that Melosh believes reinforce traditional feminine associations with nature (Figure 24).<sup>44</sup> Less common, however, is the barefooted male frontiersman, though Laurent's male pioneer finds interesting correspondences in a Section portrayal of an unshod *Young Abraham Lincoln* by James Hansen for the Los Angeles Post Office and Courthouse (1941), a comparison to be pursued further below (Figure 25). Reasonably, Laurent's other sculptures of the period tend to be full-length female nudes, so he may simply have been more comfortable modeling bare feet.<sup>45</sup> Ultimately, however, *Spanning the Continent*'s unclad feet indicate that this couple functions symbolically, as a frontier *type*. Stylistically, this work resembles much of Laurent's oeuvre (he was particularly known for direct carving in wood and stone), with its reductive forms, stylized features, and some expressionistic distortion of anatomical proportion. By depicting the male figure as brawny and with a nude torso, Laurent contracted two tropes of New Deal art in *Spanning the Continent* – that of the pioneer family and that of the heroic worker.

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<sup>44</sup> Melosh, 49.

<sup>45</sup> His Section commission, a relief with two dock workers, also uses bare feet.

Cynthia Culver Prescott traces the competing meanings of frontier family monuments for American secular versus Mormon audiences and concludes, “most prominent artists abandoned western families during the Great Depression and World War II.”<sup>46</sup> The prominence of this theme in New Deal art, however, makes her assessment untenable. Her claim places her in the camp of scholars who have historically neglected New Deal art, as it also serves her article’s argument for the originality of artist Avard T. Fairbanks 1936 monument, *Tragedy at Winter Quarters*, which she finds particular for its incorporation of pioneer husband alongside “Pioneer Mother.”<sup>47</sup> Melosh, on the other hand, pays close attention to the dynamics of the male and female pairings in the decade’s artwork. She sees the frequency of their pairing in frontier settings as one important iteration of her conception of the 1930s “comradely ideal,” an ideal that “made marriage a trope for citizenship ... addressed new views of women and the contemporary crisis of manhood,” and “argued for their [men and women’s] complementary roles as citizens.”<sup>48</sup> Scenes of a man, woman, and sometimes children as a cohesive unit were in fact so popular, Melosh explains, “that artists referred simply to the Pioneer Family, capitalized like a proper name, when they described this element in their designs.”<sup>49</sup>

New Deal art shifted the American Western narrative. Fiction, especially dime novels popular since the early years of the twentieth century, had promulgated a

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<sup>46</sup> Cynthia Culver Prescott, “The All-American Eternal Family: Sacred and Secular Values in Western Pioneer Monuments,” in *We Are What We Remember: The American Past Through Commemoration*, ed. Laura Mattoon D’Amore and Jeffrey Lee Meriwether, (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 349.

<sup>47</sup> Its supposed particularity she attributes to the influence of the Church of the Latter Day Saints. *Ibid.*, 342.

<sup>48</sup> Melosh, 4.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

vision of the American West in which the frontier and desert remained free from the domesticating desires of chattering, East coast, parlor-bound women.<sup>50</sup> Now, in contrast, many representations showed men and women together, “in formal compositions that underscored sexual complementarity by giving equal space and mass to each figure.”<sup>51</sup> Laurent’s *Spanning the Continent* fits this categorization well. Laurent depicts the pair as a heterosexual team, their gazes and strides in sync, moving towards the same goal. While the male figure is definitely heftier, the woman is compositionally and narratively more central. Her trim waistline and round breasts declare her gender loudly. A letter records Samuel Memorial Committee Secretary Marceau’s advice to Laurent that he increase slightly the woman’s height, which may have furthered the sense of mutuality embedded in the final product.<sup>52</sup>

While not as obvious, for example, as an image of a pioneer woman cradling an infant in her arms, Laurent’s *Spanning the Continent* nevertheless embodies what Melosh calls “the domesticated frontier.”<sup>53</sup> Beyond the compositional complementarity of the man and woman in *Spanning the Continent*, Laurent established the theme of “the domesticated frontier” by simply *including* a female figure, an inclusion highlighted by this being the only sculpture of the Central Terrace to do so.<sup>54</sup> In addition to the basic representational incorporation of women, another

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<sup>50</sup> See Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 39-45. She describes Westerns as a site for the “destruction of female authority,” the “antithesis of the cult of domesticity that dominated American Victorian culture,” and a reaction to the nineteenth-century “dominance of women’s culture.”

<sup>51</sup> Melosh, 47.

<sup>52</sup> Henri Marceau to Robert Laurent, June 11, 1936, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 2.

<sup>53</sup> Melosh, 42.

<sup>54</sup> The Committee had earlier rejected the “Schoolmistress” as a possible subject for the sculptural program, questioning, “how does the schoolmistress differ from any other young woman?” and dismissing it as not sufficiently “dramatic.” “Re: Fairmount Park Association,

dimension of the domesticated frontier is its disavowal of violence between Native Americans and white settlers as pertinent subject matter. While Laurent's prompt from the Art Association went on to describe the personages of *Spanning the Continent* as "[I]and hungry, gold hungry, Indian hating, [and] money mad," it also gave the artist leeway in his representation of the "push west," elaborating that "the material that might be used is almost limitless ... to every man there would probably come a different thought of expression ... [and] it must be his dream of what those moving hordes were after and expressed."<sup>55</sup> As conceived by Laurent, and approved by the Committee (from which he received comparatively little resistance), *Spanning the Continent* participates in New Deal art's vocabulary of gender. Insofar as it exhibits the comradely ideal, it also embraces the ideal of political democracy that the comradely ideal signified.<sup>56</sup>

While speaking to the comradely ideal, Laurent's sculpture still maintains a distinctive emphasis on manly vigor, but this is not necessarily contradictory. Even with the introduction of femininity into the equation of the Western mythos, New Deal art emphasized the importance of "the resolute manhood of the exemplary pioneer," and the "comradely ideal" was ultimately hierarchical.<sup>57</sup> Section correspondence and press releases emphasized manly characteristics, and administrators pressured commissioned artists to adjust their designs accordingly. As

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Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial (Symbolism.)" memorandum, June 14, 1933, FPAA, Box 119, Folder 4.

<sup>55</sup> "The Report of the Committee ... ," 30.

<sup>56</sup> Melosh, 50.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

we will see, the Samuel Memorial Committee was not hesitant to exert similar pressure to “bulk up” male figures in the Central Terrace when deemed necessary.<sup>58</sup>

Despite the consistent emphasis on masculine fortitude throughout the 1930s, Melosh argues that ideals of manliness did adjust in the New Deal era and that portrayals of Abraham Lincoln, in particular, reflect this change.<sup>59</sup> She proposes “a new reading of the heroic representations of Abraham Lincoln so prominent in 1930s” with the domesticated frontier in mind, one that while embracing “the heroic imagery of the frontier past” also “illustrates the critique of rugged manhood.”<sup>60</sup> Her point here becomes relevant due to an explication of *Spanning the Continent* in the Fairmount Park Art Association files, which reads, “the male figure is of the Lincoln type, simple, rugged, ready to battle forces unknown.”<sup>61</sup> While Lincoln’s notoriously tall and lanky figure seems contrary to the sturdy figure of the man in Laurent’s *Spanning the Continent*, the word choice of “Lincoln type” is revealing.<sup>62</sup> Section art portrayed Lincoln almost exclusively as a young man rather than hardened statesman,

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<sup>58</sup> The pressure to “bulk up” sculpture reflects broader cultural attitudes encouraging young American men to “bulk up.” Michael Kimmel describes the interwar period as a challenging moment for masculinity. One symptom was the popularity of Charles Atlas (born Angelo Siciliano), a body builder whose gymnasium business boomed during the Depression. Kimmel explains, “As at the turn of the century, a masculine physique could signify success, physical strength could stand in for strength of character. Arms could make the man – or at any rate biceps and triceps could,” 210. The birth of Clark Kent as the otherworldly Superman (1938) also spoke to this challenging moment for mainstream masculinity. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 211.

<sup>59</sup> Melosh, 35.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> “*Spanning the Continent* by Robert Laurent,” FPAA Box 126, Folder 2.

<sup>62</sup> Kirk Savage *Standing Soldier, Kneeling Slave: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997) describes how sculptors and critics in fact found Lincoln’s figure “ungainly and intrinsically unsculptural,” 67. Savage argues that Lincoln exemplified the growing disparity between contemporary and classical hero, as “his figure was too tall and bony, his physiognomy craggy, and his clothing a shambles.” One critic wrote in 1887 that “he might have seemed almost the embodiment of the sculpturally impossible,” quoted in Savage, 69.

evinced the popularity of a frontier type tempered by Lincoln's famously contemplative (and hence "feminine") nature.<sup>63</sup> One depiction, Hansen's *Young Lincoln*, is particularly striking. As Melosh analyzes, Hansen's "Lincoln is bare chested, a common 1930s treatment of workers but a notable departure from the usual conventions of representation for figures with the stature of the sixteenth president."<sup>64</sup> Laurent departs in the same direction. However, while Hansen's Lincoln displays a sinuous frame along with a rather sensual posture, Laurent's pioneer adheres more closely to the New Deal imagery of the worker.

Melosh acknowledges the multiplicity of readings possible for New Deal images of the domesticated frontier and the young Lincoln. One point of view available to us in the case of *Spanning the Continent* is Dorothy Grafly's. Unconcerned with or unsympathetic to the gender politics at work, she focused instead on the Laurent's failures, spouting such vivid comments as, "the general

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<sup>63</sup> Melosh's analysis neglects what is likely an important precedent for New Deal artists' young Lincolns: Paulanship's *Abraham Lincoln, The Hoosier Youth* (1932) for the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Susan Rather calls Manship "the most visible and sought-after sculptor in America between the wars." Susan Rather, "Avant-Garde or Kitsch: Modern and Modernistic in American Sculpture Between the Wars," in *The Figure in American Sculpture: A Question of Modernity*, ed. Ilene Susan Fort (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of Washington Press: 1995 exhibition catalog), 159.

Harry Rand *Paul Manship* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989) emphasizes the impressive sum the company paid Manship for the work: "Though the insurance company commissioned this piece in the late 1920s, they paid Manship an astonishing \$75,000 in 1932, the midst of the Depression. (A little computation suggests an equivalent sum in today's dollars: a number that drives breath from the body)," 96. Such a sum would not go unnoticed by Manship's contemporaries. Manship depicted Lincoln as a youth, significant in part because no photographs of Lincoln exist before age thirty-seven. The sculptor chose to emphasize the president's thoughtfulness, and wrote that while he "depicted Lincoln as the brawny youth that he was" he also included attributes (book, dog) that symbolize the strength of Lincoln's "feelings of human sympathy and protectiveness," Manship, quoted in Rand, 97. Interestingly, four earlier sketches for the sculpture depict Lincoln *with* his mother in a variety of arrangements. Rand, 98-101.

<sup>64</sup> Melosh, 37.

impression of the Laurent is that of a promising sketch enlarged and cast, but lacking that in-between stage ... [e]ven the heads seem parts screwed on, as if the figures themselves were mannequins in a shop window ... the Mary Wigman concept of the pioneer woman is less convincing in bronze than onstage ... [and] *Spanning the Continent*, in terms of its style, is as outdated as a hoop skirt.” Disparaging of the figures’ disproportions, she warned of “crudities masked in the guise of strength.”<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, she proclaimed, “the group can lay scant claim to originality.”<sup>66</sup>

However, if we understand the Committee’s mission as parallel to that of the federal art projects – geared towards the “artistic center,” or concerned with what Victoria Grieve calls “middlebrow taste,” the studied art critic’s appreciation is of lesser importance than at of the amorphous “people.”<sup>67</sup> In fact, Grafly’s dislike of the sculpture’s obviousness might speak in a way to Laurent’s success. The Committee members themselves expressed nearly complete approval of Laurent’s design from the beginning, and difficulties in the commissioning process dealt predominantly with issues of procedure and timeline.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> “First of Samuel Memorial Figures Installed,” *Art Digest* 12 (June 1, 1938), 5. Even though her views are the only ones expressed, Grafly is not technically the author of this article but is quoted at length throughout the piece.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Grieve proposes that the animating conflict behind New Deal art was between middlebrow and highbrow conceptions of culture. Middlebrow culture, built on John Dewey’s principles, emphasized art as community-embedded, broadly available and accessible, and relevant to the everyday lives of American citizens. Without sacrificing an appreciation of expertise, New Deal art programs (particularly the FAP – at the heart of Grieve’s book) promoted middlebrow culture during the 1930s at an unprecedented level. Victoria Grieve, *The Federal Art Project and the Creation of Middlebrow Culture* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

<sup>68</sup> The more substantive comments of the Committee had to do with invigorating the woman’s stride and making her taller in order to avoid “squatness.”

### ***Body of Labor: John B. Flannagan's The Miner***

The Committee doled out more substantial criticism to John B. Flannagan (1895-1942) regarding his design for *The Miner* (Figure 5). Marceau wrote Flannagan that the Committee refused to accept his “sketch” (a small-scale model) as his “formal” submission for the commissioned piece. Marceau explained the Committee’s desire to see “greater strength and bulk in his torso,” reiterating further down the page, “we unanimously felt that your figure could be greatly improved and that it might be treated with considerably more bulk, retaining the same pose.” Marceau continued with a suggestion “to reduce the head somewhat and thus achieve greater strength and bulk in the torso.”<sup>69</sup> Writing on her husband’s behalf, Margherita Flannagan replied that John was “following the suggestion of the Committee in making the figure somewhat bulkier.”<sup>70</sup> The result is a muscle-bound figure very much in keeping with the “worker” type pervasive in New Deal art.

Numerous scholars have considered the ubiquity of this type, connecting it to the Depression economy’s crisis of masculinity and the era’s labor struggles. While Lauren Hapke’s book on the FAP considers two-dimensional art (paintings, prints, and drawings) at the exclusion of sculpture, she helpfully proclaims the particularity of the 1930s as a “unique American moment” during which “laboring people were indivisible from the art.” She finds New Deal labor iconography in many cases “instantly recognizable” by its simplicity, frozen motion, anonymity, uniformity, and “naïve realism or naturalism of treatment.”<sup>71</sup> However, this labor iconography, while

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<sup>69</sup> Henri Marceau to John Flannagan, December 17, 1936, FPAA, Box 125, Folder 9.

<sup>70</sup> Margherita Flannagan to Henri Marceau, undated, FPAA, Box 125, Folder 9.

<sup>71</sup> Lauren Hapke, *Labor's Canvas: American Working-Class History and the WPA Art of the 1930s* (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 1.

instantly *recognizable*, is rarely instantly comprehensible on any deep level, as it is wrapped up in “the cultural contradictions about labor” that were so much a part of the decade.<sup>72</sup>

John B. Flannagan’s *The Miner* certainly finds its place among Hapke’s “Social Realist dance” of an “industrial army” made up of “imagined drillers, haulers, construction workers, welders, miners, and steel-mill workers.”<sup>73</sup> Flannagan’s *The Miner* is a crouching, broad-shouldered, nude male figure with a toned chest and oversized arms. He holds attributes of his trade – the pick ax and sifting bowl. The bowl is nestled between his inner thighs, and his right forearm spans its opening. He presses the ax against the left side of his body. He hunches forward slightly, casting his solemn gaze at a downward angle.

The photograph of *The Miner* reproduced in Balkin Bach’s *Public Art in Philadelphia* highlights the extent to which the muscular anatomy of *The Miner* (rather than its intellect – symbolized by the head, which the Committee asked Flannagan to scale down) has determined viewers’ response to the sculpture (Figure 26). The framing of the book’s black and white image decapitates *The Miner*, and reduces it to sheer back, leg, and bicep muscles; sunlight attractively dapples the limestone surface.<sup>74</sup> This synechdocic representation of *The Miner* supports Erika Doss’s understanding of the anonymous worker, “beefcake” type in New Deal culture. She writes that depictions of nearly-nude male workers “pique[d] the

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> The photographic framing of Sardeau’s *The Slave* in this volume works similarly. It also crops the figure in such a way that it becomes headless, reducing *The Slave* to chains, hand, and abdominals. See Balkin Bach, 96.

admiration and desire of spectators,” and thus made male, laboring bodies vulnerable as “source of visual pleasure and objects of desire.”<sup>75</sup> She provides many possible readings for such objectified depictions, from a revisiting of the turn-of-the-century’s crisis of masculinity to a yearning for manliness defined wholly by professional calling to a transformation of modern male body image in light of opportunities for leisure activity and white-collar work to an optimistic counterweight to the reality of massive unemployment. The brawny worker for her is an unresolved type, its meanings “ambiguous,” “ambivalent,” and “paradoxical.”<sup>76</sup> Revisiting the same research material half a decade later, Doss seems to have resolved little, still describing 1930s artists’ treatments of laborers as “conflicting” and “contradictory.”<sup>77</sup>

Among Doss’s suggestions, a particularly appropriate reading for the Samuel Memorial’s “bodies of labor” is a nostalgic one, as the Association devoted the Central Terrace to visualizing the century that had past. Building on that, another compelling facet of these “bodies of labor,” as Doss calls them, contrasts such idealization, whether or not it is essentially nostalgic, with the tumultuous nature of 1930s working-class history. This approach proposes that New Deal artists adopted more intensely leftist artists’ and illustrators’ thematic interest in workers and stylistic components of their designs, but wielded the visual vocabulary paradoxically to soften or detract from workers’ lived experience.<sup>78</sup> *The Miner*’s body of labor is

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<sup>75</sup> Erika Doss, “Towards an Iconography of American Labor: Work, Worker, and the Work Ethic in American Art, 1930-1945,” *Design Issues* 13 (1997): 64, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1511587>.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 66; 59.

<sup>77</sup> Doss, 2002, 241.

<sup>78</sup> We recognize that artists had multiple allegiances. For example, Elizabeth Olds, whose racially-ambiguous prints of Pennsylvania miners Hapke discusses, 103-108, was ultimately kicked out of FAP for her communist sympathies.

evidently not that of a northeastern Pennsylvania coal miner's. Flannagan's gold miner's attributes are not the headlight, hardhat, or grit of an underground worker's. *The Miner* is equally not representative of the dismal mining conditions and the poverty of mining communities described in the Senate's La Follette Committee reports (1936-1941), or the atmosphere described by FAP artist Harry Sternberg, who called mining, "dangerous, filthy, rotten work" with gasses that killed and pervasive dampness that "cripple[d] the men with rheumatism."<sup>79</sup>

Nevertheless, the 1930s marked an "apex of working-class power and unity" in Philadelphia, and across the United States. James Wolfinger insightfully considers the matrix of party politics, labor unionism, race, and ethnicity in his book, *Philadelphia Divided*. He describes how in a city that had been overwhelmingly Republican, the 1930s marked a dramatic turn in party allegiance across racial/ethnic lines, a transition that coincided with a surge of union activity. The leading unions – the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations came to an "uneasy truce" in these years. The Democratic Party connected with labor, and the United Mine Workers Secretary-Treasurer Thomas Kennedy became Pennsylvania's lieutenant governor in 1936.<sup>80</sup> Thus while Flannagan's *The Miner* on one level diluted the reality of the 1930s worker experience, it also participated in a contemporary discourse in which labor and laboring people found greater voice.

### ***New Deal Renaissance: J. Wallace Kelly's The Ploughman***

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<sup>79</sup> Hapke, 68.

<sup>80</sup> James Wolfinger, *Philadelphia Divided: Race & Politics in the City of Brotherly Love* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 39.

New Deal art administrators and supporters frequently evoked the Renaissance as a descriptor of or metaphor for the blossoming of art production under federal patronage. The FAP used the language of a burgeoning “American cultural Renaissance” in its official literature.<sup>81</sup> In an article called “Save the Art Projects,” critic and historian Elizabeth McCausland reminded readers of the *Nation* that while “the Italian Renaissance had lasted three centuries . . . our government allows less than two years.”<sup>82</sup> Scholars have understood these sorts of evocations of the Renaissance as ideologically indicative, but the poses and muscularity of so many New Deal bodies of labor also gives the Renaissance comparison a stylistic grounding. While failing to achieve Renaissance master Michelangelo’s grace and fluidity of form, J. Wallace Kelly (1894-1976) nevertheless situated the body of *The Ploughman* in a posture indicative of a number of Michelangelo’s famous compositions (Figure 6).

*The Ploughman*’s proper right shin rests flush against the pedestal. His left leg is bent, knee raised, and foot planted. He turns at the waist, runs his left arm over his left thigh to brace his right knee with his left hand, while shifting his shoulders in the same leftward direction. He bends the elbow of his right arm so his forearm butts up against his right side and his right hand meets the strap that runs along his

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<sup>81</sup> Jonathan Harris, *Federal Art and National Culture: The Politics of Identity in New Deal America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 37. An article in the Section’s *Bulletin* journal reminded workers “that Florentine artists during the Renaissance were ‘so imbued with the glory of Florence that they would do nothing which did not enhance that glory,’” a statement which McKinzie suggests “boded ill for socially critical and abstract art alike,” 57. A regional director of the PWAP, John Ankeney, wrote an article for the *Dallas Times Herald* in 1934 that also called upon the memory of the Italian Renaissance’s patronage, wall painting, and grandeur to bolster support for New Deal art. Francine Carraro, “A Reassessment of New Deal Art: Examining the Mural Program in Texas,” in *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Shaping of American Political Culture*, ed. Nancy Beck Young, William D. Perderson, and Byron W. Dayness, (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 64.

<sup>82</sup> Harris, 132.

pectorals and supports the sack of grain on his back. Expressionless, he peers downwards.

*The Ploughman*'s twisting, crouching action recalls that of a number of *ignudi* from Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel Ceiling, a resemblance bolstered by the nudity and emphasized musculature *The Ploughman* shares with these fanciful painted youths, which Michelangelo scholar William Wallace has described as "animated sculptures sitting on the architectural frames of the paintings" (Figure 27).<sup>83</sup> Michelangelo often drew attention to the sensuousness and contortion of his figures' bodies by sculpting bands of fabric straining across twisted or otherwise engaged muscle. Examples include *The Dying Slave* (1513-1516), with a binding that rings the back and chest, and the unfinished *Awakening Slave* (c. 1520-1530), with an emerging strip across the thighs.<sup>84</sup> In the *Victory* (c. 1525-1530), a strap crosses the nude's shoulders and supports a cape-like mass of billowing fabric behind (Figure 28). The *Victory*'s allegorical youth grabs the band by his shoulder with the fingers of his right hand in a movement akin to that of Kelly's *Ploughman*. Though lacking the torsion of these other examples, the colossal *David*'s (1501-1504) unfolded slingshot strap falls over his left shoulder and the stretch of his back. Like those of the *David*, Kelly and Flannagan dramatically amplified the size of their *Ploughman*'s and *Miner*'s hands.

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<sup>83</sup> William Wallace, *Michelangelo: The Complete Sculpture, Painting, Architecture* (New York: Universe, 2009), 177.

<sup>84</sup> While Kelly's first-hand experience of the Italian masterpieces is unaccounted for, as a student, the artist received a Cresson Traveling Scholarship from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, which he used to study in Paris, France. There, he likely saw the Louvre's famous *Dying Slave*. Kelly's biography from Michener Museum, <http://www.michenermuseum.org/>.

Michelangelo's reputation is inseparable from the bulbous, hulking forms of his male and even female figures. Despite the absence of one-to-one correspondence, this interest in muscle, plus bodily twists, exaggerations, and the use of fabric bands undeniably connects Kelly's work to Michelangelo's. The comparison supports another facet of Doss's explanation of the big-bodied worker, that in addition to connecting with labor concerns, "the appearance of naked men in 1930s American art signals a continuation of long-standing aesthetic interest in the ideal human form, mostly male, from the Greco-Roman era to the Renaissance."<sup>85</sup>

Grafly called upon Michelangelo to articulate certain weaknesses of the Samuel Memorial's Central Terrace sculpture, weaknesses that epitomized her problems with much of her contemporaries' work. Against the "crudities in the guise of strength" made by those of "many a modern art mind" for whom "disproportion is synonymous with strength, while symbolic power seems to lurk in overemphasis on hands, feet and breasts," she conjured Michelangelo, who she felt truly understood anatomical exaggeration for symbolic and emotional import. "Michelangelo," she opined, "exaggerated, although he did not distort, understood such principles and based his art upon them, for his figures are energized through congruous movement and not through posturing."<sup>86</sup> Reviewing Flannagan's and Kelly's sculptures once the Art Association installed them on either side of Laurent's *Spanning the Continent*, she revisited her denunciation of ineffective exaggeration, accusing both additions to the Central Terrace of "serv[ing] notice on the public that the contemporary sculptor

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<sup>85</sup> Doss, 1997, 60.

<sup>86</sup> "The Samuel Memorial." *Art Digest* 13 (December 1938): 9.

has scrapped the principles of anatomy without substituting any brilliant new commentary upon form.”<sup>87</sup> Of the two, she found *The Ploughman* “better.”

J. Wallace Kelly’s *Labor (Unskilled)* (1933-36), produced under federal art program patronage, evokes even more closely Michelangelo’s Sistine Ceiling *ignudi* (Figures 29-30). However, Kelly was also an early experimenter with sculptural abstraction, as apparent in *Arrested Action* (c. 1932), *Monument to Aviation* (c. 1931-32), and *The American City* (c. 1932) (Figure 31).<sup>88</sup> He was one of three Philadelphia-area sculptors, along with Yoshimatsu Onaga and Wharton Esherick, who all worked independently but in a similar vanguard mode. Kelly’s commission for the Samuel Memorial, therefore, evidences his ability to “sculpt Section.” While Grafly counted Kelly’s entries for the 1933 Sculpture International, which included *Monument to Aviation*, with Lipchitz’s as among the “most abstract” of the show, perhaps it was Kelly’s completion of *Labor (Unskilled)* and his involvement in the Pennsylvania FAP that encouraged the Samuel Memorial Committee to commission the artist in 1936.

In subject matter and style, *Spanning the Continent*, *The Miner*, and *The Ploughman* epitomize New Deal sculpture. They reinforce the analyses of New Deal art put forth by art and cultural historians who have worked on the topic within the confines of government patronage – Melosh’s comradely ideal, Grieve’s middlebrow culture, Doss’s manly workers, and Hapke’s iconography of labor.<sup>89</sup> Masculinity

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Marter, 132-33.

<sup>89</sup> Despite the brevity of her articles versus the others’ full-length studies, Doss’s focus is actually in a sense more broad than theirs. She builds her analysis from the Wolfsonian Museum’s permanent collection, and in doing so ends up considering material produced outside the realm of government patronage alongside “strictly” New Deal art.

proves a recurrent theme, relevant not only in New Deal art but also more broadly in New Deal administration, programming, and culture. In March 1933, two months before the Sculpture International and less than one month after FDR's election, the federal government passed legislation that created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC – the first New Deal relief agency), “and with it, the federal government's involvement in the ‘man-building’ process began in earnest.”<sup>90</sup> Promoting hard work as an ameliorative for unemployment and depression, the CCC sought to “build up their [young men's] bodies” along with their self-esteem.<sup>91</sup> Jeffrey Suzik has observed the way in which “narrative after narrative objectified the CCC boy's bodies, intimating that an ever more exemplary manliness came with outstanding physical conditioning.”<sup>92</sup> CCC photographs reinforced the idea promoted by its publicity rhetoric – photograph after photograph shows shirtless boys with bronzed, hairless chests (Figure 32).<sup>93</sup> While, as discussed above, Flannagan's *The Miner* reveals little about 1930s mining experience, his image of the kneeling miner does recall the pervasive image of CCC boys planting trees. Suzik quotes one participant's “vivid depiction of his skillful wielding of an axe” as “an intently physical affirmation of developing manliness.”<sup>94</sup> While this boy's description involves “vigorous movements” of his axe flung into the ground, photographs from the CCC archive (such as Figure 33) show the CCC planter/worker more at rest, with axe in

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<sup>90</sup> Jeffrey Ryan Suzik, “‘Building Better Men’: The CCC Boy and the Changing Social Ideal of Manliness,” *Men and Masculinities* 2 (1999): 156.

<http://jmm.sagepub.com/content/2/2/152>. Coined in 1934, “CCC – A Builder of Men,” became one of the program's slogans. Suzik, 164.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

hand, bent over his fledgling tree.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, Maren Stange has argued that CCC work offered boys “the opportunity to claim for their own the special virtues the agrarian myth had long attributed to those who live by cultivating the soil,” and thus “confirm[ed] a version of history that cast the Anglo-Saxon settlement of North America as the rightful establishment of an ‘agrarian empire’ to be built and husbanded by a ‘pioneer army.’”<sup>96</sup> Hence Laurent’s combination of pioneer settler and brawny worker types in *Spanning the Continent* seems particularly apt for New Deal sculpture.

The next chapter focuses on parts of the Samuel Memorial project that inhabit New Deal themes less obviously. However, the documentation of the Fairmount Park Art Association around this half of the project provides an especially rich opportunity to analyze the difficulties inherent in the commissioning of public, monumental sculpture, as well as the complexities of visualizing American history – issues that enlivened New Deal art under government patronage as well. The following thus pays the archival material an even greater deal of attention, and addresses not only with what we see today at the site, but also what we *do not* see, finding in the unrealized designs and proposals much to be considered.

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<sup>95</sup> While this particular young man looks relatively scrawny, the CCC made it a point to show bodies across the spectrum of development, often juxtaposing slimmer figures with more developed ones, in order to emphasize transformation.

<sup>96</sup> Maren Stange, “Publicity, Husbandry, and Technocracy: Fact and Symbol in Civilian Conservation Corps Photography,” in *Official Images: New Deal Photography*, ed. Pete Daniel, Merry A. Foresta, Maren Stange, and Sally Stein (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press), 67.

## THE NORTH EXEDRA

***Into the Melting Pot: Maurice Sterne's Welcoming to Freedom***

While Bach describes the entire Samuel Memorial, with all its three terraces and seventeen sculptures, as a “monument to confusion,” a level of confusion is also evident when looking exclusively at Maurice Sterne’s (1877/78 – 1958) *Welcoming to Freedom* (Figure 7). Its symbolism is arguably the most opaque of any work in the Central Terrace. It consists of two bronze, mostly nude male figures on a three-foot tall, rectangular, granite base. The bronze is polished and smooth, and some areas have developed a green patina. The fingertips of the upright figure reach to a height of over thirteen feet. The figure is pitched forward on its right leg, with arms upraised, palms forward, and elbows slightly bent.<sup>97</sup> When the viewer stands at the foot of the base and looks up, this standing figure looms above his or her head (Figure 34). The seated figure to the right hunches slightly over with one leg arched to the side and the other folded in. Its oversized and heavily muscled arms display peculiar body language (Figure 35). The figure holds its right forearm, bearing a tightened fist, upright, and braces that forearm with its left hand.<sup>98</sup> The archaic stylized faces, with few individual distinctions and a slightly forlorn look are differentiated almost exclusively by the set of their gazes. The standing figure looks up and out, with eyes

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<sup>97</sup> Sterne’s figure’s gesture, scant clothing, and overall stylization call to mind Louis Lentz Woodruff’s sculpture for the Fountain of Science at Chicago’s 1933 World’s Fair. While not a comparison to be pursued in depth here, perhaps the similarities suggest that Sterne’s figure also encompasses a spirit of progress and forward movement.

<sup>98</sup> The pose can unfortunately be said to resemble an obscene hand gesture that the French sarcastically refer to as the *bras d’honneur*.

more wide-open than those of the seated sculpture, who looks downward and, we sense, inward as well.

While their anonymity suggests that they represent the everyman and their odd salutes suggest that they are communicating some sort of message, the sculptures ultimately depend on their context for legibility – the North Exedra is inscribed with the words “Welcoming to Freedom” (Figure 36). Yet even this inscription does not completely decode Sterne’s sculpture. While the standing figure’s open posture and raised arms may be interpreted as a gesture of welcome, we wonder how that relates to the more closed-in pose of the seated figure. These questions are not only prompted by a viewer’s sense of curiosity, but also by the impression that Sterne’s figures do not further the historical program of the Samuel Memorial. The Committee in charge of the Memorial commissions made clear to the artist that despite their stated openness to Sterne’s own artistic interpretations, they wished for “whatever symbolism [he] arrived at [to] be as clearly expressed as possible.”<sup>99</sup> They also recorded their stance that “representation of an historical event has some special requirements different from purely decorative sculpture.”<sup>100</sup> Just what these requirements are, and how they apply in *Welcoming to Freedom*, are questions that ultimately seem to have eluded both Sterne and the Committee itself.

While the South Exedra was to embody “the push to the west through the first half of the Nineteenth Century,” the North Exedra was to express the “consolidation of Democracy and Liberty in the decades of 1850 to 1880, entailing the freeing of the slaves in the Civil War and the welcoming to our shores of countless Europeans,

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<sup>99</sup> Henri Marceau to Maurice Sterne, October 10, 1937, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 16.

<sup>100</sup> Charles Borie to Carl Milles, July 30, 1934, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 8.

resulting in our being, in effect, a mixed race.”<sup>101</sup> A diagram in the Report of the Committee labels the central sculptural group of the North Exedra of the Central Terrace as “the Melting Pot” (Figure 37). It also describes the idea:

*We recommend that the central group in this exedra be symbolic of the brotherhood of peoples by emphasizing ... the welcoming of the oppressed from all lands. It may be that the slave might play a part in this Central Group, but we urge that the emphasis should be primarily on the spiritual aspect of the mingling of all European peoples with our blood.*<sup>102</sup>

Slavery in this country (the oppressed in *this* land) complicates the idea of the United States as bastion of democracy and liberty. The Committee’s rhetoric, though, softens this paradox of American history by conflating the ideas of emancipation and immigration, explaining that, “spiritually there is an association between the freeing of the slaves and the welcoming to our shores of the immigrant hordes.”<sup>103</sup> The pamphlet further resolves that, “there is hardly anything more significant of America than the conception of it suggested by the phrase, ‘the Melting Pot.’”<sup>104</sup> However, the report also makes clear that the elements desirous of being melted are exclusively European. Earlier Committee records communicate that “our blood” does *not* refer to a Native American heritage. In response to Alexander’s proposed subject matter, the Committee recorded its feeling that “the symbolization of the Indian is a little absurd. We have robbed and cheated him. Why erect monuments? Besides the Indian is symbolic of nothing but the Indian; and the conception has been made tawdry.”<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> While the archives do not contain Alexander’s actual report, we do know that he held a profound interest in Native American culture and myth. The Nebraska State Capitol program includes inscriptions from Pawnee Ritual Songs, a Navaho Hymn, and Sioux Lore. See “The

That “our blood” is also not African American is evident in the language of the report, which allows “the slave” to be a *part* of the central group, but not a part significant enough to interfere with the overall “melting pot” theme. David Hollinger has analyzed the problematic concept of the “melting pot” in American history in a way that helps historicize the rhetoric of the Samuel Memorial report, and helps get at how the limitations of the ideal of “cultural democracy” in the visual arts during the 1930s are ultimately tied up with the historical limitations of American democracy more broadly.<sup>106</sup>

Hollinger explains that the term “melting pot” became popular in the early twentieth century to deal with the massive influx of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe.<sup>107</sup> The term addressed the potential for “incorporation” of Italian, Jewish, and Polish immigrant populations, “not simply as ethnic groups within a plural society but as individuals who would as a matter of course intermarry with the British and other Northwestern European stocks.”<sup>108</sup> Philadelphia had certainly seen this boom in immigration – the Italian-born population multiplied from 500 in 1870 to 65,000 in 1920; Jewish immigration spiked in 1882 and in 1920, 95,000 foreign-born Jews lived in the city; and recently-arrived Poles shared South Philadelphian

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Philosopher: Hartley Alexander Burr,” Nebraska State Capitol, <http://capitol.org/building/history/team/hartley-alexander>.

<sup>106</sup> Even though Grieve calls the ideology of New Deal art “middlebrow culture,” this is essentially a stand-in for the often-cited ideology of “cultural democracy,” which at its best entails both equitable representation in and access to art for all citizens.

<sup>107</sup> David Hollinger, “Amalgamation and Hypodescent: The Question of Ethnoracial Mixture in the History of the United States,” *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 1366, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/529971](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/529971).

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

neighborhoods with Italian and Jewish ethnics, as well as with Irish-Americans whose ancestors has arrived in enormous numbers in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>109</sup>

Few discussions of the “melting pot” in the early part of the twentieth century mentioned African Americans for whom intermarriage and procreation with those of European descent was primarily discussed under another rubric – that of “miscegenation.”<sup>110</sup> This is not true across the board, and in fact the British, Jewish playwright Israel Zangwill, whose 1908 play titled “the Melting Pot” popularized the phrase, did, at least in a passing line in the play’s script, include non-Europeans in his understanding of term.<sup>111</sup>

However, the more exclusive version of the “melting pot” squares with the conception of it articulated in the Samuel Memorial Committee’s report. It is notable that the Committee’s report altogether ignores other populations of immigrants to the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly Asian immigrants, a fact that reflects the biases embedded in the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 (not repealed until 1943), or, more basically, the lack of a substantial Asian population in the Philadelphia region during the 1930s.<sup>112</sup> Moving slightly beyond

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<sup>109</sup> Wolfinger, 16-19.

<sup>110</sup> Hollinger, 1366. Gary Gerstle also discusses the idea of “mongrelization” as the negative mirror of “melting pot,” and as a term employed to promote restricting immigration in the late nineteen-teens and nineteen-twenties. Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 107.

<sup>111</sup> There is some disagreement over Zangwill’s position. Gerstle writes that, “many writers ... like Zangwill, often did not think to include blacks, Hispanics, or Asians into their American crucible.” Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 6. On the other hand, Hollinger counts Zangwill among the few who did mention non-Europeans in his conception of the melting pot, citing a line from Zangwill’s “The Melting Pot,” which includes “Celt and Latin ... Greek and Syrian – black and yellow” among the groups that would be made one. Still, Hollinger admits this is a “fleeting” moment in the script. Hollinger, “Amalgamation and Hypodescent,” n.14, 1366.

<sup>112</sup> Wolfinger, 7. Of course, the Samuel Memorial was never intended to be representative of Philadelphia history, but American history.

the 1850-1880 span of history this exedra represents, it is also interesting to reflect on the significance of the year 1890 (a year, which we will see, the “Melting Pot” artist cites as his own moment of immigration). The census of that year was used as touchstone for immigration legislation of the 1920s that proportionally, and severely, restricted the number of immigrants allowed to enter the United States from certain areas of the globe.<sup>113</sup>

In fleshing out the meaning of “melting pot,” the Samuel Memorial Committee was actively engaged in determining how to celebrate and make visual a definition and trajectory of American history. They had stated in an earlier memorandum that they were interested in what was “symbolic of American life, not any civilization.”<sup>114</sup> The narrative they conceived of is inclusive in some ways while being quite exclusive in others, which points to the tensions and limitations inherent in the ideas of democracy and the teleological progression of American history as guiding principles for visual art.

Sterne, Warneke, and Sardeau, the three artists represented in the North Exedra, were themselves all European-born immigrants to the United States.<sup>115</sup> Out

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<sup>113</sup> These areas include Southern and Eastern Europe. See “The Immigration Act of 1924,” U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian, [history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act](https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act).

<sup>114</sup> “Notes on Dr. Alexander’s Synopsis of the Sculpture and Inscription for the Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial,” FPAA, Box 119, Folder 4.

<sup>115</sup> It could be said that this portion of the terrace itself embodied a sort of “melting pot.” Along similar lines, Ingersoll suggests that the birthplaces of the sculptors chosen for the North Terrace, the final phase of the Memorial project, “[Waldemar] Raemisch and [Gerhard] Marcks, Germany; [Koren] der Harootian, Armenia; [José] de Creeft, Spain; [Ahron] Ben-Schmuel, North Africa; and [Jacques] Lipchitz, Lithuania ... suggested an artistic League of Nations.” Ingersoll, “The Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial,” 252. There is nothing in the records to indicate that Sterne’s, Sardeau’s, and Warneke’s immigrant identity played any part in their selection for the North Exedra of the Samuel Memorial, but there is relatively little on record regarding the actual selection-process generally. Ingersoll claims that the

of this group of three, Sterne was the most established artist. In 1933, he had been the subject of the Museum of Modern Art's (MoMA) first retrospective of a living American artist.<sup>116</sup> Critical reaction to the exhibit is interesting when considering Sterne's commission for the Samuel Memorial, for it challenged Sterne's very "Americanness." Sterne was originally from Latvia, though he immigrated to the United States at age twelve and trained at the National Academy of Design. He identified as Russian, spoke German, Yiddish, and English, acknowledged his Jewish heritage, and had also traveled widely in the 1910s and 20s.<sup>117</sup> One critic wrote, in response to Sterne's MoMA show, that while "the Oriental Semitic from Russia has made an exceptionally good record in art since his transplantation to our shores ... as yet there is a lack of American mentality in the culture and erudition of such complex citizens of the world as Maurice Sterne."<sup>118</sup> This critic's assessment of such a lack of "American mentality" tells us little to nothing about Sterne's actual art. However, it does point to the currency of considerations surrounding American identity and the idea of the "melting pot" in the art world of the 1930s.

Sterne also reinforces the link of the Samuel Memorial project to the New Deal federal art projects. PWAP and Section Director Edward Bruce trained as a painter with Sterne in the late 1920s. This was unavoidably a formative artistic experience for Bruce, both stylistically and ideologically. Bruce praised his

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"League of Nations" of the North Terrace, discussed above, was "not intentional." We can assume the same is true for the Central Terrace.

<sup>116</sup> Jeffrey R. Hayes, "Sterne, Maurice," *Grove Art Online, Oxford Art Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T081358>.

<sup>117</sup> Matthew Baigell, *Jewish Art in America: An Introduction* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 36.

<sup>118</sup> Quoted in *Ibid*.

government programs for “taking the snobbery out of art and making it the daily food of the average citizen.”<sup>119</sup> The MoMA catalogue essay describes Sterne’s art in a way that corresponds with Bruce’s “culturally democratic” values: “It exemplifies no school; it calls for no special psychology or aesthetic theory; and it speaks with the same clarity and appeal to the masses as to the experts.”<sup>120</sup>

Returning to the symbolism of the “melting pot” in Sterne’s *Welcoming to Freedom*, we should consider that a more literal, and perhaps clearer, visual vocabulary was certainly available to Sterne at the time. The “melting pot” idea would have conjured up images of kettles, fires, and swirls of people, such as depicted on the playbill cover of Zwangwill’s “Great American Drama” (Figure 38). The graduation ceremony of the Ford Motor Company’s English School in the 1910s spectacularized this range of imagery (Figures 39-40).<sup>121</sup> At the ceremony, student-workers entered a giant kettle labeled the “American Melting Pot,” sporting costumes identifying their countries of origin and holding those countries’ flags. They emerged moments later transformed – dressed in a suit and tie, now with the American flag held high. It is probably this sort of imagery that Alexander had in mind when he explained to the Committee that he found the concept of the “melting pot” (a phrase he had not recommended) to be “certainly trite” and expressed his hope that the

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<sup>119</sup> Quoted in Park and Markowitz, “New Deal for Public Art,” 136. Bruce’s rhetoric here exemplifies Grieve’s “middlebrow culture.”

<sup>120</sup> H. M. Kallen, “Maurice Sterne and his Times,” in *In Maurice Sterne: Retrospective Exhibition 1902-1932*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1933 exhibition catalog), reprinted in *Three American Modernist Painters: Max Weber, Maurice Sterne, Stuart Davis*, (New York, Published for the Museum of Modern Art by Arno: 1969), 8.

<sup>121</sup> See Keith Melder, “Working Together,” in *A Nation of Nations*, ed. Peter C. Marzio (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 372-373; and “Ford Motor Company Sociological Department and English School,” The Henry Ford, Benson Ford Research Center, <http://www.thehenryford.org/research/englishSchool.aspx>.

sculptor would not take the idea up literally and that the phrase would not be inscribed on the corresponding architectural wall.<sup>122</sup>

By the 1930s, the Statue of Liberty firmly stood as the most potent symbol of immigration to America. An illustration of Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi's colossal statue also appears on "The Melting Pot" playbill, surrounded by swirling streams of anonymous bodies. An address by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Statue of Liberty's dedication, makes concrete the association between the Statue of Liberty and the immigrant "melting pot" (Figure 41). In front of the Statue, Roosevelt declared how, "out of the melting pot, the rich promise which the New World held out to those who came to it from many lands is finding fulfillment."<sup>123</sup> He characterized the Statue's flame as a "beacon of liberty," drawing to America's shores those people who could be "fired anew by the dream of a better life."<sup>124</sup>

Sterne thus had much symbolic material to consider when developing his "melting pot" design. One wonders therefore why Sterne's final design seems to have relatively little in the way of overt symbolism. The archival material is invaluable on this account, because it documents earlier iterations of the sculpture,

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<sup>122</sup> Hartley Burr Alexander to Charles Borie, February 17, 1934, FPAA, Box 119, Folder 5.

<sup>123</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Statue of Liberty," October 28, 1936, online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15210>.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. Roosevelt's speech reminds us that, as Gerstle explains, he was a figure who "in word and deed welcomed [Eastern and Southern Europeans] into the American nation and allowed them to become full-fledged Americans, both in sentiment and in fact," 129. Roosevelt's speech expands on his conception of the melting pot, when he says, "we take satisfaction in the thought that those who have left their native land to join us may still retain here their affection for some things left behind—old customs, old language, old friends," but that, "looking to the future, they wisely choose that their children shall live in the new language and in the new customs of this new people. And those children more and more realize their common destiny in America."

and we can chart the artist and the Committee working to solve both aesthetic and historical problems.

An early model submitted to the Committee contains the basic elements of the final design, but it also differs dramatically (Figures 42-43). The two figures, not yet oriented frontally, turn around a central access defined by a third, vertical element – a triangular column, which Sterne intended to be stone, containing a rising flame, which he intended to be gilded. Along with photographs of his model, Sterne explained his intentions to the Committee. He called on his own immigrant experience, writing that:

*The subject is the 'Melting Pot.' I have tried to express the spiritual implication rather than the physical fact. To me, as to most emigrants who came over here around 1890, American was synonymous with liberty, an escape from European tyranny and oppression, a resurrection of the spirit.*<sup>125</sup>

We can guess that Sterne felt these sentiments sincerely, having fled Moscow as a boy, with his family due to anti-Jewish pogroms.<sup>126</sup> In the design, the seated figure was to have chains around its wrists, which would pass in front of the column's sculpted, gilded flames and be imaginatively "melted." While Sterne may have been seeking to express the "spiritual implications" rather than "physical fact" of the "melting pot" (one indeed wonders what the "physical fact" of a metaphorical phrase would have looked like anyway), this design calls on the symbolism of the flame present in the Statue of Liberty and even the metaphor of heat implied in Ford's

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<sup>125</sup> Maurice Sterne to Henri Marceau, undated, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 15.

<sup>126</sup> Hayes, "Sterne, Maurice."

human kettle.<sup>127</sup> The other youth, who lunges across the platform stood, Sterne wrote, for a new generation.

The Committee prompted Sterne to develop his design further, and he sent a model several months later for another round of consideration. Sterne commented on the limitations of the model. He explained that once enlarged, “not only the form, spatial and actual” but “also the symbolism will be much more direct.”<sup>128</sup> He particularly honed in on the trouble caused him by the flame, which he exclaimed almost “drove him crazy.” The “symbolism of the fire,” he promised the committee, would appear “much more direct” in the final design, and the chain inflated to become a more major feature in the overall composition.<sup>129</sup> In this phase, he explained to the Committee the importance of the fire, which, he wrote, “had a double function: in melted their chains and out of it arose a new free vigorous humanity.”<sup>130</sup>

The elimination of the flame in the next design iteration reveals that Sterne connected the fire motif directly with the idea of the “melting pot” (Figures 44-45). The Committee had considered the last model, with the flame and the chains, and had explained to Sterne that it no longer felt “Melting Pot” was the best title for the work, but rather something along the lines of “Welcoming the People of All Lands.”<sup>131</sup> In

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<sup>127</sup> Sterne might have also adopted the flame symbolism, and overall stylization, from Paul Manship’s *Prometheus* (1934), at Rockefeller Center. However, the mythological stature of Prometheus should be distinguished from what Sterne and the Committee were trying to achieve. Artist Carl L. Schmitz, regarding Section murals wrote, “I think that persons entering the building, would get more local pride out of a design having to do with their own activities than a mythological figure which the average man does not even understand.” Quoted in Park and Markowitz, “New Deal for Public Art,” 137. Without the strict regional specificity of post office murals, Sterne and the Committee also avoided mythological figures of the Manship *Prometheus* genre.

<sup>128</sup> Maurice Sterne to Henri Marceau, September 28, 1937, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 16.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Henri Marceau to Maurice Sterne, October 10, 1937, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 16.

his next submission to the committee, the flame was omitted altogether, as the change in title made what had earlier been such a central part of the composition, in Sterne's words, "superfluous."<sup>132</sup>

When Marceau first contacted Sterne, he explained the value of the process of submitting models and receiving feedback. He wrote that, "it allowed absolute freedom of conception in the first instance and permitted modifications in regard to scale."<sup>133</sup> The modifications that Sterne's design underwent, however, were far more elaborate than those of just scale. Along with the title change, Marceau also reported to the artist that the Committee had found the flame motif to be too high, the figures too diffuse, and the standing figure's movement "too violent outward."<sup>134</sup> Despite all this, Marceau reminded the artist that each sculptor had "been left pretty much to his own devices to arrive at a symbolism and consequently the Committee has no desire to exercise any jurisdiction in this direction other than express the hope that whatever symbolism is arrived at be as clearly expressed as possible."<sup>135</sup>

When Sterne, like a number of the other commissioned artists, expressed his disappointment in having to resubmit model after model, Marceau blamed the less-than-sophisticated members of the Park Commission, who needed to approve the model after it was okayed by the Samuel Memorial Committee and the Fairmount Park Art Association Board. Marceau described the Park Commission as "composed of laymen whose ability to visualize sculpture is limited to say the least."<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Maurice Sterne to Henri Marceau, February 9, 1938, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 16.

<sup>133</sup> Henri Marceau to Maurice Sterne, February 25, 1936, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 15.

<sup>134</sup> Henri Marceau to Maurice Sterne, October 10, 1937, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 16.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Henri Marceau to Maurice Sterne, November 26, 1937, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 16. There is some irony that Grafly considered the members of the Samuel Memorial Committee

Finally, Sterne submitted a design that the Committee deemed complete and correct enough to submit to the Park Commission. A photograph of the model was enlarged as a silhouette and photographed on site. The resulting photograph is deceptively naturalistic (Figure 46). However, one last element needed to be changed – the nudity of the standing figure. Citing the Park Commission, Marceau apologetically wrote to the artist that they approved the design with the exception of the standing figure, whose nudity would upset “certain cranks” and “some of the ministers in town.”<sup>137</sup> Marceau wrote that he and others felt this to be “ridiculous,” but that “they [needed] take the view which the Federal Government does in such matters.”<sup>138</sup> In a quite long letter, Marceau called on the “ample precedent in this history of art for the nude form with some sort of loin cloth,” and expressed his trust that Sterne would devise an “ingenuous solution” that would little detract from the sculpture’s monumental simplicity.<sup>139</sup>

The fact that the nude figure was a point of contention, and that the Committee ultimately erred on the side of federal standards, points to parallels between the goals of the Samuel Memorial project and those of the government art projects. It suggests that officials understood the Samuel Memorial as having

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*themselves* to be laymen: “The choice of a sculptor on the basis of general ability offers a new and hopeful turn of the lay mind, for the choice, as in the Samuel Memorial bequest, is vested in a lay jury.” Grafly, “Sculpture at Philadelphia,” 407.

<sup>137</sup> Henri Marceau to Maurice Sterne, June 10, 1938, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 16.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.* As Assistant Director of PWAP, Edward Rowan, advised, “any artist who paints a nude for the Public Works of Art Project should have his head examined.” Rowan to Regional Chairmen, March 5, 1934, quoted in McKinzie, 23.

<sup>139</sup> Henri Marceau to Maurice Sterne, June 10, 1938, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 16. Marceau concludes the letter by expressing his hope that this request be kept quiet, as “public discussion would be unfortunate.”

communicative and didactic purposes beyond sheer beauty and artistic expression.<sup>140</sup> They knew the sculpture was to be installed in a public place (Fairmount Park) and intended for public appreciation, and they envisioned, perhaps correctly, that public (or at least elements of that public) as rather conservative or simply unschooled in “high art.”

The sculpted nude form did have a place in Philadelphia art, where the Rodin Museum had opened its doors on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, less than one and a half miles away from the Central Terrace, in 1929 – the same year that funds for the Samuel Memorial became available (Figure 47). In fact, Cret, the designer of the Samuel Memorial’s architectural terraces, also designed the similarly-styled museum building (Figure 48).<sup>141</sup> From the beginning, the museum’s collection included standing nudes such as *The Age of Bronze* (1875-77) (Figure 49). Even before the museum opened, in 1926, a cast of Rodin’s *The Thinker* had been installed in Logan Circle, also on the Parkway (Figure 50).<sup>142</sup> While Sterne’s *Welcoming to Freedom* lacks the animating tactility of Rodin’s masterpiece, there are still striking stylistic similarities between the two sculptures, including the articulation of the figures’ musculature and undifferentiated masses of hair, plus the proportions of hands to arms. Elements of Sterne’s seated figure particularly recall *The Thinker* – its one forearm raised with the other oriented horizontally, its hunched posture, as well as the

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<sup>140</sup> While Marceau makes clear that it was the Park Commission that demanded the change, he and the Committee did not actively reject the Commission’s directive. Despite Marceau’s long, explanatory letter, Sterne’s reply is short and to the point. A telegram reads, “will be glad to cooperate in every way with committee problem can easily be solved.” Maurice Sterne to Henri Marceau, undated, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 16.

<sup>141</sup> “About the Museum,” Rodin Museum, <http://www.rodinmuseum.org/285-96.html>.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

face's heavy brow, slight scowl, and downward-cast eyes. Ilene Susan Fort has described the extent of Rodin's influence on modern American sculpture, and we certainly sense that influence here.<sup>143</sup>

The objections to Sterne's figure's nudity underscores that despite its geographic closeness with the Rodin Museum, *Welcoming to Freedom* was seen as operating in a different milieu, apart from European modernism and outside the confines of Philadelphia's elite art institutions. While Sterne covered his standing figure in the group, the seated figure remained unclothed, suggesting that a certain modest nudity (like that of *The Thinker*, Flannagan's *The Miner*, and Kelly's *The Ploughman*) was in fact appropriate for public space while more explicit nudity (e.g. Rodin's *The Age of Bronze*) was not.

The edited sculptural group was enlarged in bronze, cast by the sand modeling process, and installed in late November or early December, 1939. Its unveiling must have been unremarkable, as even Sterne himself was initially unaware that his sculpture had been set in place.<sup>144</sup> Perhaps the Association wanted to avoid yet another occasion for criticism like that amassed on the South Exedra of the Central Terrace by Grafly, who had commented acerbically the year before that the

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<sup>143</sup> Ilene Susan Fort, "The Cult of Rodin and the Birth of Modernism in America," in *The Figure in American Sculpture*. She argues that Rodin's "belief that sculpture was an interpretive art form for expressive purpose altered the American concept of figurative sculpture," 31. She credits Rodin with "the demise of the academic figure and traditional allegory as source material for progressive sculpture," and with refreshing the academicism of so much American sculpture of the previous century thanks to his "liberating the human form from its mimetic function and restrictive social mores," 24. Sterne's *The Awakening* (1923-24), displays similarities with Rodin's own *Awakening* (modeled ca. 1890, carved before 1914). Sterne's *Sitting Figure* (1932) also possesses qualities of *The Thinker*, but articulated in a style somewhat more reminiscent of German sculptor Wilhelm Lehmbruck, with elongated torso and limbs.

<sup>144</sup> Maurice Sterne to Henri Marceau, December 6, 1939, FPAA Box 126, Folder 17.

“appalling permanency of such statues [i.e., Flannagan’s and Kelly’s] makes one give thanks for the transiency of gallery shows.”<sup>145</sup>

In Sterne’s final group, the chain was reduced to three barely-visible links held in the upraised fist, rendering the seated figure’s gesture all the more obscure.<sup>146</sup> This lack of clarity is made apparent in the conflicting interpretations of this figure’s stance. Writing in 1992, Balkin Bach omits any mention of chains, and describes the pose of the seated figure as a gesture of “solidarity.”<sup>147</sup> The contemporary placard on-site still describes the figure as partially bound by chains that are in the process of breaking, while yet another explanation talks about the seated figure as symbolic of those “still bound by ancient tradition.”<sup>148</sup> Chains are also the main attribute of the Hélène Sardeau’s *The Slave*, one of *Welcoming to Freedom*’s flanking statues, which further complicates the envisioning of American history at work in the Samuel Memorial’s Central Terrace. *The Melting Pot* sculpture was to *relate* to American slavery, but not be *about* slavery, and perhaps the chained figure without the flame of the “melting pot” would have made this distinction unclear.

*Welcoming to Freedom* ultimately departed from the “melting pot” metaphor, resulting in some symbolic confusion. This confusion suggests that the 1930s may have marked a transitional moment for the “melting pot” conception of the American

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<sup>145</sup> “The Samuel Memorial,” 9.

<sup>146</sup> The chains are hard to see in person, because they are relatively small and held high up. To see the sculpture in its entirety, one must stand several paces away from the pedestal, but from that distance, the chains blend into the bronze of the hand. A classmate brought the chain to my attention when the photograph was enlarged and projected in University of Maryland’s Michelle Smith Collaboratory for Visual Culture.

<sup>147</sup> Balkin Bach, 223.

<sup>148</sup> John F. Habeson, “Samuel Memorial in Philadelphia,” *National Sculpture Review* 10 (Summer 1961): 19. Heinz Warneke Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

people, a terminology that later generations have found to be unsuitable to describe the pluralistic nation. Park and Markowitz claim that New Deal art offered a vision of the US “not [as] a country of ethnic and racial rivalries, not even a melting pot, but a nation, a people, made up, as proponents of all ideologies agreed, of something called ‘the common man.’”<sup>149</sup>

### ***Heinz Warneke’s The Immigrant as Common Man***

One of the characteristics of what George L. Mosse calls “the masculine stereotype” in modern, Western societies is that it became normative despite its idealization.<sup>150</sup> By integrating the strong worker type, the epitome of 1930s manhood, into his depiction of *The Immigrant*, Heinz Warneke (1895-1983) affirmed the immigrant’s status as “common man” without offsetting his primary identification as newcomer (Figure 8). Warneke’s figure hunches over, kneeling with one leg underneath his frame and the other bent upward into his chest (Figure 51). *The Immigrant’s* extremities clench in towards his body, forming a huddled position that suggests cold and discomfort.<sup>151</sup> His bulky, rippling left bicep tenses as it pushes into the rolled blanket held inside his left arm. His right hand grasps a staff, the attribute of a traveler, and supports his chin. Warneke simplified *The Immigrant’s* hair into a helmet-like mass. *The Immigrant’s* eyebrows are long and smooth, and his facial expression is inscrutable. Unlike the other three limestone figures, *The Immigrant*

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<sup>149</sup> Park and Markowitz, 1992.

<sup>150</sup> George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 12.

<sup>151</sup> Perhaps Warneke designed his composition to evoke the “huddled masses yearning to breathe free” from Emma Lazarus’s famous poem, “The New Colossus,” which graces the Statue of Liberty’s bronze plaque.

does not put a brawny chest on display, but his arm and leg muscles paired with his solemn expression nevertheless indicate his strength and resolve.

The Fairmount Park Art Association records reveal that Warneke's symbolism was not always so legible (or at least so relatively legible, compared to Sterne's similarly themed *Welcoming to Freedom*). In the correspondence, Warneke references an in-person conversation with Marceau, and reports that he has been "revolving and revolving the question of how to make the significance more apparent" and, finally, "arrived at the solution."<sup>152</sup> He changed the figure's staff, which had been oriented horizontally in the sketch, to an upright position, and he "changed the blanket so that it can be more plainly seen and is obviously a blanket."<sup>153</sup> Without addressing the specifics, Marceau confirmed that he was indeed "very glad to know that [Warneke had] changed the whole so as to make the symbolism a little clearer."<sup>154</sup>

At an earlier stage, the Committee had found that the first sketch for *The Immigrant* was not sufficiently masculine – "the curves were too rounded and the whole impression is that of a female figure."<sup>155</sup> The Committee's criticism here parallels their critique of Flannagan's sketch as not sufficiently "bulky." A photograph held in Warneke's papers at Archives of American Art captures the composition in this state (Figure 52).<sup>156</sup> The final sculpture moves closer to the sort

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<sup>152</sup> Heinz Warneke to Henri Marceau, January 31, 1939, FPAA, Box 127, Folder 2.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Henri Marceau to Heinz Warneke, February 11, 1939, FPAA, Box 127, Folder 2.

<sup>155</sup> Henri Marceau to Heinz Warneke, October 18, 1938, FPAA, Box 127, Folder 2.

<sup>156</sup> Here, the immigrant's pole is horizontal, not vertical, and that the body displays less musculature than that of the final sculpture. Heinz Warneke Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

of big body aesthetic apparent in *The Miner*, *The Ploughman*, and *The Slave*. After undergoing a process which Warneke's biographer Mary Cunningham describes as "a general thickening all over," *The Immigrant* was approved by all parties and installed in the Terrace in October 1940.<sup>157</sup>

Michael Kimmel theorizes that one avenue in which male, homosocial anxieties have played out in American history is through racial exclusion and nativism. In the 1920s and 30s, Americans expressed racism and xenophobia in gendered terms, and "successive waves of immigrants were depicted as less mentally capable and less manly – either as feminized and effete or wildly savage hypermasculine beasts – and thus likely to dilute the stock of 'pure' American blood."<sup>158</sup> Particular targets in the 1930s were Filipino men, who endured both ends of the spectrum of gendered bias – nativists framed them as too delicate *and* too virile.<sup>159</sup> Kimmel connects the Immigration Act of 1924 and the Tyding-McDuffings Act of 1934 (which gave the Philippines independence in part so that Filipinos would no longer be allowed passage into America's borders as American nationals) to anxieties around masculinity, writing "anti-immigrant nativism [was] again a recourse for some who searched for a foundation for secure manhood" during the interwar period.<sup>160</sup>

Working in a seemingly opposite direction, Warneke, with the encouragement of the Committee, subsumed *The Immigrant* into the common trope of masculinity repeated in every corner of the Central Terrace. *The Immigrant's* bent head and

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<sup>157</sup> Cunningham, 95.

<sup>158</sup> Kimmel, 194.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 194.

downcast, blank gaze could be said to promote this body's objectification on the part of the viewer, but it would be hard to argue that *The Immigrant* encourages this to any greater degree than the other three secondary figures.

*The Immigrant* stands as Warneke's only major non-government commission in the decade.<sup>161</sup> But it is impossible to truly tease apart or distinguish the style of this non-government project from the style of any of his government-commissioned pieces. These include the *Express Mail Carrier* (1935-36) for the Department of the Post Office Building in Washington, DC (now the William Jefferson Clinton Federal Building) (Figure 53). Cunningham remarks upon the mail carrier's "strong massive hands" and its "athletic build," with stomach muscles clearly articulated through the figure's overalls. She also points out the figure's "simplified and smoothed ... surfaces," adding to the descriptors which could just as easily be applied to *The Immigrant*. The committee that judged the entries for this Section competition included Maurice Sterne, and he was one of the two members responsible for winnowing down finalists from preliminary entrants.<sup>162</sup> It is not surprising to learn then that Sterne requested Warneke as one of the sculptors for the pieces to flank his *Welcoming to Freedom*, a request which the Committee obliged.<sup>163</sup> These interconnections highlight the integration of the Samuel Memorial in New Deal art.

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<sup>161</sup> Cunningham, 94.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 94.

### *Completing the Narrative: Hélène Sardeau's The Slave*

I suggested above that the chains of Sardeau's (1899-1969) *The Slave* might have confused the meaning of the chains in Sterne's design for *Welcoming to Freedom*, but misunderstanding has also revolved around *The Slave*'s chains in and of themselves (Figure 9).<sup>164</sup> In his description of the Samuel Memorial Project, Committee member Sturgis Ingersoll describes Sardeau's *The Slave* as "unshackled."<sup>165</sup> In the same vein, the inscription on the sculpture's pedestal reads, "Their Bands Have Broken Asunder" (Figure 54). However, *The Baltimore Afro-American* correctly observed that *The Slave* is actually still "handcuffed in irons, which he is seeking to break."<sup>166</sup> The Baltimore paper's article announced *The Slave*'s exhibition in the courtyard of the Museum of Modern Art in the summer of 1940 (Figure 55).<sup>167</sup> This period of independent exhibition in a major New York City

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<sup>164</sup> An interesting precedent for a chained figure in Philadelphia public sculpture is William Rush's *The Schuylkill Chained* (1825). See Balkin Bach 30-31; 95.

<sup>165</sup> Ingersoll, "Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial," 251.

<sup>166</sup> "Slave Breaking Chains Shown at New York Museum," *Afro-American*, July 13, 1940, Proquest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>167</sup> Also see, for example, Eliot Elisofon, "'The Slave' Goes on Exhibition Here," *New York Times*, June 25, 1940, nytimes.com. Most of the attention around the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) exhibit is not of a particularly critical nature. Beyond general descriptions, one article makes a value judgment and calls the sculpture "impressive" and "highly simplified." Howard Devree, "A Reviewer's Notebook," *New York Times*, June 30, 1940, nytimes.com. Elisofon's *New York Times* photographs of *The Slave* at MoMA have an interesting afterlife. Another photograph of the sculpture in the museum's courtyard, which must be from the same series, appears illustrating an excerpt from Nathan I. Huggins's book, *Black Odyssey: The Afro-American Ordeal in Slavery* (1977) that was published in the *New York Times*. See Nathan I. Huggins, "Sic Semper Tyrannis," *New York Times*, October 23, 1977, nytimes.com. One wonders, and further research might reveal, if the editors of the late 1970s indiscriminately chose an image with slavery as the subject matter from the *Times* files, or if Huggins was involved in the selection of the image. Unlike the image printed in 1940, the artist herself is not included in this photograph of this sculpture. Though the caption attributes *The Slave* to her as artist, the caption does not relate the date of the sculpture or its

museum before installation in Philadelphia distinguishes *The Slave* from all the other Central Terrace sculptures – none of which were exhibited elsewhere.<sup>168</sup> Sardeau's *The Slave* is also distinguished by the artist's emphasis on racial distinctiveness. While the limestone medium gives all four secondary figures in the Central Terrace a consistent light coloration, Sardeau used hair pattern and facial features, such as full lips and nose, to characterize her figure as of African origins.<sup>169</sup> *The Slave*'s expression is more emotive than that of *The Miner*, *The Ploughman*, or *The Immigrant*. His brow is furrowed in intensive concentration, his chin pressed in towards his sternum. Sitting on his feet, with both shins parallel to the base and knees jutting slightly beyond the base's borders, he tenses his arms and clenches his fists on either side of his right thigh, across which spans the length of the chain. The chain resolves itself in heavy manacles encircling each wrist.

Sardeau's representation taps into depictions of manly workers, which we already saw embodied in *The Miner*, *The Ploughman*, and *The Immigrant*. Her sculpture calls to mind Heinz Warneke's *Black Worker* (or *Man, the Provider*) for the Harlem-Macombs Housing project – a Treasury Relief Art Project that Warneke completed shortly before undertaking *The Immigrant* for the Samuel Memorial

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Fairmount Park home. Removed from specificities time and place, *The Slave*'s meaning on one level remains intact, but its implications are also reoriented and reinterpreted.

<sup>168</sup> Marceau complained to MoMA Director Alfred Barr that the arrangements for the statue's interim display at MoMA were "rather irregular." See Henri Marceau to Alfred Barr, July 16, 1940, Box 126, Folder 13, FPAA. A Registrar's Office document from September 23, 1940, acknowledges the statue's removal from MoMA. FPAA, Box 126, Folder 13.

<sup>169</sup> Habeson (for *The National Sculpture Review*) in fact labels *The Slave* as "*The African*." Heinz Warneke Papers.

(Figure 56).<sup>170</sup> While Warneke's figure's body is comparatively poised – the torso stiff and upright, similarities between his and Sardeau's figures include the rippled musculature, kneeling position, and outfit consisting of little more than belted pants. Samuel Memorial correspondence is revealing when it comes to the reception of Warneke's design for *Black Worker*. The Harlem Committee, composed of future tenants of the Harlem-Macombs Housing project, disliked Warneke's initial model for the sculpture, saw "Warneke's portrayal of a black man as a laborer degrading ... objected to the fact that the figure was naked to the waist ... [and] also felt that the facial features should be softened" (Figure 57).<sup>171</sup> Tensions between the artist and committee played out in a well-attended meeting, where it was settled to keep the basic composition the same but to "idealize" the figure's facial features. In a letter to Marceau, Warneke described his feelings after the dust settled – "the two large negro figures [*Man, the Provider* and *Woman, the Mother and Housekeeper*] are a bit 'modified' not as I should have chosen – The negro committee didn't want them to be too negroid!"<sup>172</sup>

The Samuel Memorial correspondence reveals no comparable debate or disagreement around Sardeau's depiction of a black man. The Committee in fact never took any real issue with the composition or symbolism of Sardeau's *The Slave*, as it had so intensely with Sterne's *Welcoming to Freedom*.<sup>173</sup> Perhaps this speaks to

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<sup>170</sup> Melosh describes *Black Worker* as "borrow[ing] the iconography of the manly worker in a sculpture of a black man who kneels with a tool in one hand and a gear at his feet." She attributes its "unusual use of a black model for a monumental subject" to its location, 86.

<sup>171</sup> Cunningham, 83.

<sup>172</sup> Heinz Warneke to Henri Marceau, September 22, 1936, FPAA, Box 127, Folder 1. Also quoted in Cunningham, 83.

<sup>173</sup> Marceau does write to Sardeau about "other suggestions made regarding your figure and these I can better explain to you in front of the silhouette," but what those suggestions might

Sardeau's skillful prediction of and accommodation to the Committee's desires, but it also relates to the lack of equitable representation in the Committee's racial makeup and Sardeau's seemingly straightforward interpretation of the commission.

Yet Sardeau's *The Slave* marks the first permanent, public sculptural representation of emancipation in the city of Philadelphia, despite the fact that 1930s Philadelphia claimed one of the largest populations of African Americans in the country, a population that included many migrants from former slave states who had arrived in the 1920s.<sup>174</sup> While *The Slave*'s crouching position brings it into harmony with the other three limestone figures in the Central Terrace, the posture also aligns it with the conventional iconography for the movement from slavery to freedom. First disseminated in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British abolition campaign graphics, the vision of a crouching slave made its way into American public sculpture

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have been is unknown. Henri Marceau to H el ene Sardeau, October 18, 1938, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 13.

<sup>174</sup> Around 140,000 African Americans settled in Philadelphia during the period of the Great Migration between 1910 and 1930, greeted with a level of ambivalence by "Old Philadelphians" – long-term black residents of the city. In the 1930s, Philadelphia's total population of African Americans was smaller only than New York City's and Chicago's. See Wolfinger, 12-14. In 1876, the Austrian government sent a statue by Francesco Pezzicar to Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition. But this example of a proudly standing, powerful black man holding a crumpled paper representing the Emancipation Proclamation was only temporary. According to Savage, "it has little chance of finding a permanent home on a public monument in the United States," 87. My conversation with Curator of Education and Public Programming at the African American Museum of Philadelphia, Adrienne Whaley, on April 14, 2014 uncovered no earlier examples of public, sculptural representations of slavery and/or emancipation in Philadelphia. Ren e Ater has noted the "one-hundred-year gap" in the construction of public monuments to slavery and/or emancipation in the US between the late-nineteenth-/early-twentieth- centuries, and the early twenty-first century. "The Challenge of Memorializing Slavery in North Carolina: The Unsung Founders Memorial and the North Carolina Freedom Monument Project," in *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in Public Space*, ed. Ana Lucia Araujos (New York: Routledge, 2012), 141. While Sardeau's *The Slave* was neither conceived of nor functions as a memorial, this "gap" nevertheless contributes to its being the first (at least extant) representation of slavery or emancipation in Philadelphia public space.

most visibly and infamously in Thomas Ball's *Emancipation Memorial* (1876), a monument to Abraham Lincoln erected in Washington, D.C. and replicated in Boston (Figures 58-59).<sup>175</sup> Compositions like that of the *Emancipation Memorial*, which pairs a standing Lincoln and a kneeling slave, appear in proposals for Philadelphia's own memorial to the president. Philadelphia was in fact one of the first cities to found a memorial committee after Lincoln's assassination.<sup>176</sup> The committee approached a number of sculptors for its commission, including John Rogers and Randolph Rogers. While John Rogers ultimately declined to enter the committee's competition, he described his immediate vision for the memorial as Lincoln "just risen from writing ... receiving with one hand a petition from a crouching negro, whom he is raising with another."<sup>177</sup> Similarly, a surviving model related to Randolph Roger's design entry for the Philadelphia commission depicts a stern Lincoln grasping the wrist of a kneeling, bare-chested female slave (Figure 60).<sup>178</sup> Two-figured monuments configured in this way insinuated African American dependence, and thus solidified racial hierarchies and crystalized racist biases. In ending up with a single-figure Lincoln memorial by Randolph Rogers, Philadelphia averted the problematic implications inherent in Ball's *Emancipation Memorial*, but

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<sup>175</sup> For additional examples of the iconic image of a kneeling, chained slave in material culture, see Hamilton, Douglas and Robert J. Blyth *Representing Slavery: Art, Artefacts and Archives in the Collection of the National Maritime Museum* (Burlington, VT: exhibition catalogue for the National Maritime Museum in association with Lund Humphries): 193-199.

<sup>176</sup> Balkin Bach, 49.

<sup>177</sup> Savage, 72.

<sup>178</sup> Savage, 76.

also avoided a clear, public, sculptural recognition of slavery and its undoing for another seventy years (Figure 61).<sup>179</sup>

An alternative model from which Sardeau's *The Slave* can be said to descend is John Quincy Adam Ward's *The Freedman* (1863) (Figure 62). Kirk Savage devotes a chapter of his book and a separate article to explaining why Ward's small-scale sculpture was never taken up as a large-scale public monument despite its contemporary critical acclaim. For one, it was not a Lincoln memorial, and its meaning depended entirely on the figure of a black man apparently responsible for his own liberation. Ward absented the "conventional ... standing figure representing white power symbolically free[ing] the black slave who kneels or crouches below."<sup>180</sup> Instead, Ward presented an independent black man in an indeterminate position. The seated man leans forward and twists his torso to the left. *The Freedman*'s engaged right arm presses at a ninety-degree angle against a tree stump, as if he is propelling himself to rise. Below his cuffed left hand dangles an empty manacle from his free right wrist. Despite the clearly broken bonds in *The Freedman*, there are certain similarities between Ward's sculpture and Sardeau's *The Slave*. For example, Savage has related the twisted body of Ward's figure to the classical Belvedere Torso (Figure 63).<sup>181</sup> Sardeau's sculpture's torso twists similarly, and her stylized articulation of abdominal contours evokes the Belvedere Torso as well. Both *The Slave* and *The*

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<sup>179</sup> While the figure of the slave was removed from Rogers's memorial for unknown reasons, see Savage, 84, some of the significance of emancipation is nevertheless acknowledged by the inscription on the left side of the monument's base – an extract from the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln also holds a scroll in Rogers's design, but the scroll is not engraved.

<sup>180</sup> Kirk Savage, "Molding Emancipation: John Quincy Adam Ward's 'The Freedman' and the Meaning of the Civil War" in *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 27 (2001): 28, [www.jstor.org/stable/4102837](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4102837).

<sup>181</sup> Savage, 1997, 53.

*Freedman* feature furrowed eyebrows. However, while *The Freedman* looks apprehensively into the distance, *The Slave* looks down in directed concentration – suggesting that Sardeau’s *Slave* exists a step prior to *The Freedman* – a reading supported by the titles themselves. According to Savage, *The Freedman* never became a monument to emancipation for a web of reasons including the figure’s liminal status between enslavement and freedom, which did not promote a resolved historical narrative, pay homage to white leaders, or ease white racial anxieties. However, Sardeau’s *The Slave*, despite its significant size, has also never functioned as a true monument to freedom or a memorial to African American people.<sup>182</sup>

Situated in the Central Terrace, it functions as a piece of a historical narrative more

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<sup>182</sup> Sardeau’s *The Slave* received no significant coverage in the *Philadelphia Tribune*, the city’s leading African American newspaper and the oldest, continually running African American newspaper in the country. The year that Sardeau signed her contract with the Fairmount Park Art Association, scholar and Director of the Association for Negro Life Carter Godwin Woodson published an article in the *Tribune* entitled “Monuments are Connective Tissue in the History of Race,” in which he despaired the lack of monuments to African American leaders, sites, and moments of history, cautioning, “if one generation is to remain so disconnected from the other as not to profit by the striking examples of the good and the beautiful, the race will forever remain in the childlike state.” He claims that, “we do not do all we can in thus remembering the heroes and heroines by whose arduous labors we have arrived at our present state.” Regarding monuments to “freedom and slavery,” he writes that “the Negro has been treated with others thus portrayed,” and he notes that “the thoughts of the other race have been dominant” in soldier monuments. He warns that African Americans must be particularly cautious of monuments that ridicule, and he calls for black artists to represent black experience in a way unavailable to white artists, who are often “too far removed from the Negro to experience his thoughts and strivings.” That this article was not followed by one about Sardeau’s (a white, Jewish immigrant from Belgium’s) *The Slave* is telling. Also telling is the lack of controversy surrounding the installation of *The Slave*. Ilene D. Lieberman has chronicled the tensions that arose, particularly between Irish and African American communities, surrounding the location for the impressive, nearly contemporaneous *All Wars Memorial to Colored Soldiers and Sailors* (1934) by J. Otto Schweizer. The city’s Art Jury ended up relegating the *All Wars Memorial* to an obscure corner of Fairmount Park, before the Committee to Restore and Relocate the *All Wars Memorial* pushed to move the sculpture to Center City’s Logan Square in the 1990s. See Lieberman, “Race and Remembrance: Philadelphia’s ‘All Wars Memorial to Colored Soldiers and Sailors’ and the Politics of Place,” *American Art Journal* 29 (1998): 18-51, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1594618>.

securely bounded and resolved than that which Ward's stand-alone *Freedman* could have offered.<sup>183</sup>

Though generally content with her design, the Samuel Memorial Committee rejected both Sardeau's and Warneke's first sketches. Above all, the Committee was concerned with the lack of "harmony" between the two sculptures. The idea of "harmony" had been an issue from the beginning of the project. Reporting on the Sculpture International in 1933, Paul Cret advised the Committee to choose artists for each Terrace of the same "school," so that the final result would not look disjointed.<sup>184</sup> Later, after their selection, the Committee asked Sardeau and Warneke to hold off with their designs until Sterne's had progressed sufficiently, so that their compositions could respond to his. Marceau told Warneke, "While this may cause a delay from your point of view, from the point of view of the whole project ... the procedure is sound."<sup>185</sup> Two years later, once the sculptors were finally asked to develop their sketches, a rumor had circulated to the Committee that Sardeau wanted to sculpt her work on a larger scale than that of *The Ploughman* and *The Miner*, which were already in place on the south end of the Terrace. In reaction, Marceau wrote testily that he had to "immediately reaffirm the instruction of the Committee[,] which were that all the crouching figures in the central exedra be of the same general

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<sup>183</sup> The fine art context of the Museum of Art also removed it from the status of conventional remembrance memorial, and arguably geared it instead towards a high art audience concerned with aesthetics.

<sup>184</sup> Paul Cret, "Report," July 20, 1933, FPAA, Box 119, Folder 4. To guide the Committee, Cret provided a "Tentative List of the Most Prominent Artists in the Exhibition Grouped by 'Families.'" Those "families" included, "B. Very modern trend with qualities of force and personality. No evidence of their ability to treat historical subject -," under which he listed both Maurice Sterne and Robert Laurent.

<sup>185</sup> Henri Marceau to Heinz Warneke, June 18, 1936, FPAA, Box 127, Folder 1.

scale and volume.”<sup>186</sup> Despite the fact that Sterne’s sculptural group is taller than its corresponding group in the South Exedra, Marceau insisted “the Committee does not share [Sardeau’s] view” that *Welcoming to Freedom*’s flanking sculptures could therefore “afford to be bigger also.”<sup>187</sup> Looking at silhouettes on site, Marceau explained that, “if imagined standing,” Warneke’s figure would be much taller than Sardeau’s, and moreover, that “there exists a great difference between the two figures so far as volume is concerned.”<sup>188</sup> He insisted that each artist submit another sketch, “in the hope that the two figures could be made more harmonious when seen together.”<sup>189</sup>

The overriding concern for harmony is on one level an aesthetic problem. On another level, it underscores the Committee’s vision of *The Slave* and *The Immigrant*’s “spiritual association.” The Committee displayed concern not only with harmony between Sardeau’s and Warneke’s figures, but also between their sculptures and the two other limestone works in the Terrace. Park and Markowitz explain that New Deal artwork generally avoided insinuating “strife between races,” but, when it did, it “carried the implicit message that such conflict was in a very distant past, was necessary for progress, or was an aberration.”<sup>190</sup> The whole scheme of the Samuel Memorial is a progression through the centuries – from “[t]he settlement of our country by Europeans through the Seventeenth Century” on the south end of the South Terrace through “[t]he social consciousness . . . developing more particularly in

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<sup>186</sup> Henri Marceau to Heinz Warneke, July 5, 1938, FPAA, Box 127, Folder 1.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Henri Marceau to Heinz Warneke, October 18, 1938, FPAA, Box 127, Folder 2.

<sup>189</sup> Henri Marceau to Hélène Sardeau, October 18, 1938, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 13.

<sup>190</sup> Park and Markowitz, “New Deal for Public Art,” 138.

this generation” at the north end of the North Terrace.<sup>191</sup> By embedding slavery and immigration into an historical progression (quite literally, as they are more a part of the architectural infrastructure than the bronze sculptures,) the Samuel Memorial arguably frames these pieces of history as essentialities of progress. By stationing them in the terrace devoted to the nineteenth century, the Committee solidified them as part of a closed, historical past. And by absenting any direct reference to the Civil War, as has been proposed at an earlier stage of the Memorial’s development, the Committee resisted any real representation of conflict or disunity in American history.<sup>192</sup>

The consistency with which the Central Terrace artists portrayed all four crouching figures as “manly workers” underscores the conception of harmony described above. Sardeau’s design for *The Slave* also deals with the fraught junction of masculinity and blackness in New Deal art, as had Warneke’s *Man, the Provider*. Mosse’s study of images of masculinity centers on Western Europe during the period we are dealing with here. However, he makes an important point about the workings of what he dubs “the masculine stereotype” or “normative masculinity,” which connects idealized, masculine bodies to functioning, healthy societies. While the masculine stereotype was a positive stereotype, its existence, Mosse explains, depended on “the existence of a negative stereotype of men who not only failed to measure up to the ideal but who in body and soul were its foil, projecting the exact

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<sup>191</sup> “The Report of the Committee . . . ,” 25.

<sup>192</sup> A Civil War statue is mentioned in the “Notes on Dr. Alexander’s Synopsis of the Sculpture and Inscription for the Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial,” FPAA, Box 119, Folder 4.

opposite of true masculinity.”<sup>193</sup> Serving as foil were “groups marginalized by society, such as Jews or blacks . . . and indeed racism was based upon stereotypes and stereotyping.”<sup>194</sup> Mosse’s negative stereotype complements Savage’s categorization of the “grotesque body,” an inversion of “the canonical body” of antique standards of beauty: “[S]waying contours, wildly scattered limbs, protruding buttocks, spread-eagle legs, all devices that break the erect, contained profile of the canonical body” characterize the grotesque body.<sup>195</sup> When first approached for a Central Terrace commission by the Samuel Memorial Committee, Sardeau eagerly requested to work on *The Slave*, explaining that she found “that particular theme most sympathetic to [her] style.”<sup>196</sup> This is perhaps surprising given that her earlier sculptural work with African American subjects falls completely within the characterization of the grotesque body (Figure 64). The photograph of *Spiritual Singers* in her records at the Archives of American Art is labeled on the recto “Early work. Perhaps 1926. She saw at the Muskegee(?)[sic] Institute negro spiritual singers. They were formally dressed. She felt that this is the way they should have looked and did them without models during the next few days.”<sup>197</sup> These pieces were almost certainly included in the 1933 Sculpture International, as the exhibition checklist lists three works entitled “Negro Spiritual.” Melosh speaks to a tendency among Section artists (only three out

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<sup>193</sup> Mosse, 6. Mosse’s negative stereotype also aligns with Kimmel’s conception of a “screen” – “against which . . . ‘complete’ [i.e. straight, white, middle class, native-born American] men projected their fears and, in the process, constructed this prevailing definition of manhood,” 6. In the interwar period, “black men remained the most potent screen against which middle-class white men played out their masculinity,” 195.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Savage, 1997, 12.

<sup>196</sup> H el ene Sardeau to Henri Marceau, August 26, 1936, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 13.

<sup>197</sup> H el ene Sardeau Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

of 850 of whom were African American themselves) to exoticize black figures, finding them “especially apt subjects of sculpture.”<sup>198</sup> Perhaps Sardeau’s enthusiasm for being assigned *The Slave* points to this tendency. We find yet more explicit exoticization recorded in her letter to Marceau elaborating upon the “colorful and strange Indians” she encountered on a trip to Guatemala upon which she embarked after completing *The Slave*.<sup>199</sup>

In his oration for the inaugural ceremony for the *Emancipation Monument* by Ball, Frederick Douglass took issue with the pose of the kneeling figure (modeled after Archer Alexander) beneath Abraham Lincoln, arguing “a more manly attitude would have been indicative of freedom.”<sup>200</sup> This remark reflects Douglass’s long held belief in “masculinity as the structural opposite of slavery.”<sup>201</sup> Over half a century later, Sardeau’s *The Slave* in some ways epitomizes masculinity, but it falls well short of *memorializing* any historical circumstance or particular individual – a role the Committee never intended this or any other sculpture in the terrace to fulfill.

The August, 1940 issue of *Magazine of Art* includes a full-page image of Sardeau’s *The Slave* (Figure 65).<sup>202</sup> On the facing page is an article by Forbes Watson, Technical Director of the PWAP and then consultant for the Section.<sup>203</sup> Watson, an art critic, publicized the Section’s work in innumerable newspaper and magazine articles. Among these articles were dozens of tracts for the *Magazine of*

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<sup>198</sup> Melosh, 69.

<sup>199</sup> Hélène Sardeau to Henri Marceau, July 27, 1940, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 13.

<sup>200</sup> Quoted in Savage, 1997, 117.

<sup>201</sup> Savage, 1997, 118.

<sup>202</sup> *Magazine of Art* 33 (August, 1940): 448.

<sup>203</sup> “Biographical Information, Forbes Watson Papers,” Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/forbes-watson-papers-11027/more>.

*Art* (before 1939, *The American Magazine of Art*), one of the three journals that most thoroughly covered New Deal art.<sup>204</sup> The article facing Sardeau's image, entitled "Art in the New America," calls for greater support, rather than mere *appreciation*, of the fine arts. Watson credits, "the Roosevelt administration ... and, curiously enough, business" for being "two important friends" of American artists.<sup>205</sup> Although Sardeau's *The Slave* was neither government nor business-funded, it did not prevent the magazine editors from printing it besides Watson's impassioned article. The intentionality of this editorial choice is furthered by the fact that Watson himself acted as Associate Editor for the magazine. The pairing of article and image also hints that even in the viewpoint of its contemporaries, the Samuel Memorial project spoke to the era's broader trends and was not assessed as a separate, isolated endeavor, or a relic of a former generation's philanthropic missions.

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<sup>204</sup> Park and Markowitz, "New Deal for Public Art," 135; McKinzie, 195.

<sup>205</sup> Forbes Watson, "Art in the New America," in *Magazine of Art* 33: 449.

## CONCLUSIONS

*The Samuel Memorial Committee and Carl Milles*

The commission's conceptualization of the Samuel Memorial is most directly articulated in the thirteen-page report, "The Subject Matter of the Sculpture and Inscription... ." However, we can also get a picture of the Committee actively working out the parameters of the project in its dealings with the sculptor Carl Milles. One of the initial sculptors whom the Committee selected to be approached for the Central Terrace, Milles offered a proposal for reliefs and a sculptural group that broke with the Committee's plans radically. The ensuing debate not only illuminates the personality of the artist, it also illustrates the competing impulses among the Committee members themselves.

The Committee Chairman, Charles Borie, advocated for Milles in a letter to the other Committee members.<sup>206</sup> In the letter, he communicated Milles's vision for low reliefs on the round exedra walls, rather than the planned quotations, and for a single and central sculptural group, rather than the North/South division. Borie explained that he believed it best for the Committee to reconsider and redraft their program in light of Milles's recommendations, suggesting that the alternative, "adher[ing] to the present scheme," would "not produce a very brilliant result."<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Charles Borie to Francis Biddle, Benjamin R. Hoffman, R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Horace H.F. Jayne, Paul P. Cret, and Henri Marceau, July 19, 1934, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 8.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. He advocated for Milles's artistic vision despite the fact that an earlier letter conveyed his impression that Milles first of all knew little of American history, and second of all was not interested in the procedures of the Samuel Memorial project. Charles Borie to R. Sturgis Ingersoll, March 12, 1934, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 8.

Ingersoll replied immediately with his objections. For the most part, they were practical, in that Milles had commissions in London and South Africa that would, in Ingersoll's opinion, undermine his commitment and enthusiasm for the Samuel Memorial project.<sup>208</sup> More importantly, however, was Ingersoll's ideological opposition to the reformatting of the entire scheme based on what he repeatedly called the "say-so" of one single artist.<sup>209</sup> He elaborated his objections in terms of the long view and the very purpose of the committee, writing that they had "believed it of great importance to have a fixed plan," and furthermore, that the Committee's "work to date ha[d] been to prevent through the years some one [sic] of perhaps predominating influence going off on his own tangent with the resulting creation of hodge-podge."<sup>210</sup>

Apparently, Ingersoll's response did not settle the matter, for the records indicate that the Committee held a meeting (followed by dinner) to debate the matter. A memorandum from the meeting, broken into "pro" and "con" sections, first records Milles's presenting his plan as a central grouping in the middle of the Central Terrace with nine figures facing out in four directions. The Committee rejected Milles's plan for two reasons. First, it would "concentrate the symbolism of the growth of the United States into three principle groups instead of six," which "would be very unsatisfactory." Second, it would compel the Committee to commission "three sculptors doing three principal groups [rather than six], concentrating the work in

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<sup>208</sup> R. Sturgis Ingersoll to Charles Borie, July 20, 1934, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 8.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

much fewer hands.”<sup>211</sup> Of course, it is worth pointing out that it does not logically follow that if the Committee were to go with Milles’s plan for the Central Terrace, that the number of sculptures and thus sculptors would necessarily need to be reduced in the flanking terraces as well. This is especially true, since the North and South Terraces are barely visible from the central one.<sup>212</sup> However, the assumption that changes to the Central Terrace would necessitate parallel changes to the other two, points again to a concern for harmony and coherence throughout the entire Memorial.

In a letter reporting back to Milles, Borie explained that the Committee was compelled to reject his plan: “the chance of making the Samuel Memorial a work of prime importance is in unity of conception and unity of execution throughout the years.”<sup>213</sup> He nevertheless offered Milles one of the six planned sculptural groups, but Milles testily responded, “it is to me as if a committee had asked Beethoven to change a symphony to chamber music. How have I to do now?”<sup>214</sup> This bombastic phrasing underscores the appropriateness of an earlier comment made by Ingersoll about not allowing Milles to become the “Michengelo” “handl[ing] the entire show.”<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Charles Borie, “Memorandum in re: The Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial,” July 24, 1934, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 8. The Committee was also worried about maintaining its appearance as a united front. The Memorandum states, “A public announcement having been made of the present progress, its complete revision may be undesirable. It might produce an opinion among the Association that the Committee were very much undecided in their own minds concerning the whole matter.”

<sup>212</sup> Paul Cret, who stressed the necessity for stylistic consistency within each Terrace, credits his design for allowing variation in style from Terrace to Terrace, “without producing a jarring effect.” “A Report on the 1933 Sculpture International,” July 20, 1933, FPAA, Box 119, Folder 4.

<sup>213</sup> Charles Borie to Carl Milles, July 30, 1934, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 8.

<sup>214</sup> Carl Milles to Charles Borie, undated, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 8.

<sup>215</sup> R. Sturgis Ingersoll to Charles Borie, July 20, 1934, FPAA, Box 126, Folder 8.

Ultimately, Milles did not participate in the Memorial Project. There is some irony that in 1986, the Fairmount Park Art Association moved Jacques Lipchitz's *Spirit of Enterprise* to the middle of the Central Terrace – what would have been the focal point of Milles's design – and that Lipchitz's sculpture has been considered the “most powerful and successful work” of the entire Memorial.<sup>216</sup> Not only does the Milles episode illuminate the artist's ego and certain ironies of history, it also highlights the general considerations and debates over artistic practice and commissioned monuments taking place in the 1930s.

The decision that the singular, “Michelangelo”-esque artist should be prevented from overriding an entire committee, and that six artists were preferable to three, squares with the idea that art is not simply an outgrowth of singular genius and that there is inherent, perhaps even democratic, value to broader participation – a belief that also animated the federal art projects and the New Deal era generally.<sup>217</sup> As Grieve argues, “the essence of the New Deal was putting people, even artists, to work.”<sup>218</sup> Intentionally or not, the Committee's insistence on more artists for the Memorial ultimately meant more artists working. The Milles controversy in fact foreshadows the type of artist that the committee ultimately settled on as most appropriate for the Samuel Memorial commissions. As we have seen, all but one of the artists who were commissioned for the Central Terrace (unlike the Swedish artist

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<sup>216</sup> Balkin Bach, 100.

<sup>217</sup> See Grieve, 3. She attributes the “genius” conception of the artists versus the “worker” conception to the differences between “highbrow” and “middlebrow” (New Deal) culture. Park and Markowitz describe the Depression-era “shift of emphasis away from individualism toward collectivity,” 131. This is also the overriding theme of Robert S. McElvaine, *The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941* (New York: Random House, 1984).

<sup>218</sup> Park and Markowitz, “New Deal for Public Art,” 128.

Milles) also participated in projects for the federal government at some point during the decade.

### *The Samuel Memorial as New Deal Art*

These artists' involvement in the WPA, FAP, and TRAP comes out in their correspondence with Marceau, whose voice (as Committee Secretary) is heard most clearly and consistently in the records for the project. Reflecting back decades later, Ingersoll credits Marceau as the “sparkplug of the [Samuel Memorial] endeavor” and describes him as the “admired nurse of the architects and artists” involved.<sup>219</sup> Trained as an architect, Marceau had joined the staff of the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1933, when it accessioned the Johnson Collection, which he curated. With this accession, Marceau became Assistant Director and, in that position, worked closely with Fiske Kimball, the Museum's Director.<sup>220</sup>

The Archives of American Art interviewed Marceau as part of its New Deal and the Arts series. In this interview, Marceau frames himself and Kimball as the major forces in the regional administration of various federal art programs. He refers to them jointly as the “men in charge” of the PWAP.<sup>221</sup> While rightfully acknowledging that he and Kimball were not technically empowered by the FAP, he claims that the “titular head” of that program in the Philadelphia region, gallery-owner Mary Curran, “leaned very heavily ... on [himself and on Kimball] for

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<sup>219</sup> Ingersoll, 256.

<sup>220</sup> Henri Marceau with Richard Doud, “Oral History interview, circa 1963” (transcript), Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

advice.”<sup>222</sup> When prompted for the names of “people who should be remembered as working [in Philadelphia] in the thirties . . . who might have benefited perhaps more than others from working on the government art projects,” the first name Marceau lists is J. Wallace Kelly’s. There seems to be some slippage, at least in Marceau’s recollection, between federal art projects and Samuel Memorial commission, because Marceau immediately goes on to explain that, “We employed him [Kelly] to do some work on the Samuel Memorial out here on East River Drive.”<sup>223</sup> This suggests just how ingrained the Samuel Memorial project is within the broader history of a decade defined by increased government involvement in the arts.

Though Kimball was not on the Samuel Memorial Committee, Ingersoll (who later became Samuel Memorial Committee Chairman) was president of the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s Board, and Borie, the first Samuel Memorial Committee Chairman, headed the construction firm that collaborated with Kimball on the interior architecture of the Philadelphia Museum of Art building.<sup>224</sup> Committee member and influential Philadelphian Francis Biddle was important in the New Deal administration. Roosevelt nominated Biddle for a succession of government positions from chairman of the National Labor Relations Board in 1934 to Attorney General in 1941.<sup>225</sup> Some scholars credit Francis Biddle’s brother, the artist George Biddle, as the originator of the idea that the U.S. government employ the country’s

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> See “Portrait of R. Stugis Ingersoll,” Collections, Philadelphia Museum of Art, [www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/58416.html?mulR=29776](http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/58416.html?mulR=29776); and “Finding Aids,” Archives, Philadelphia Museum of Art, [http://www.philamuseum.org/pma\\_archives/search.php?c=FKR&f=f9004](http://www.philamuseum.org/pma_archives/search.php?c=FKR&f=f9004).

<sup>225</sup> Francis Biddle, Densho Encyclopedia, [http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Francis\\_Biddle/](http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Francis_Biddle/).

artists.<sup>226</sup> George Biddle, the so-called “father of federal art projects,” was married to Sardeau.<sup>227</sup>

These multilayered interconnections remind us that the federal art programs deeply intertwined with established art world networks. They also underscore the fact that the Samuel Memorial cannot and should not be separated from its broader historical moment. As Grieve explains, “the economic emergency of the 1930s was not responsible for cultural democracy, but it provided the opportunity to implement cultural ideals that had been coalescing for three decades.”<sup>228</sup> She argues that New Deal art projects are best understood not as springing to life after the Wall Street crash, but as growing out of progressive-era ideologies. The correspondences run deep, as the Samuel Memorial commission grew from similar ideological soil – we remember that Samuel’s civic-spirited donation was made part of her will in 1907.

For all the Committee’s concern with “symbolizing American life, not any civilization,”<sup>229</sup> the Central Terrace undeniably relates to European precedents and contemporary European trends. Framed by Paul Cret’s French-derived Beaux Arts architectural setting, the “American” sculpture might seem out of place were it not for the eclecticism encapsulated in the style of the sculptors’ work. Thinking through the idea of the “melting pot,” the Committee also *enacted* a “melting pot” of sorts. While

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<sup>226</sup> McKinzie, 5.

<sup>227</sup> See Harris, 24, who excerpts the letter that Biddle sent Roosevelt praising the achievements of the Mexican muralists, and encouraging Roosevelt to provide the “little impetus” necessary for a similar flourishing of “vital national expression” in the U.S. Biddle’s rhetoric again evokes the appeal of the Renaissance, as he points to the Mexican muralists “producing the greatest national school of mural painters since the Renaissance.”

<sup>228</sup> Grieve, 10.

<sup>229</sup> “Notes on Dr. Alexander’s Synopsis of the Sculpture and Inscription for the Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial,” FPAA, Box 119, Folder 4.

all based in the U.S. at the time of the commissions, the six Central Terrace sculptors came from diverse geographical and educational backgrounds. The Committee evidenced no preference for a particular brand of training or national school. The artists' diversity is telling. Warneke, born near Bremen, trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin.<sup>230</sup> Sardeau, born in Antwerp, moved to the U.S. as a teenager and studied in New York City – at Barnard College, Cooper Union, the Art Students League, and the School of American Sculpture, before spending several years in Paris, where she showed at the Salon d'Automne.<sup>231</sup> Sterne, whose complex background I addressed earlier, trained at the National Academy of Design in New York and also spent several years learning in Paris before traveling to East Asia, where he absorbed other influences. Laurent, from the Brittany region of France, connects the group somewhat as he trained with Sterne in Rome and taught at the Art Students League.<sup>232</sup> Flannagan studied at the Minneapolis Institute of Art and made productive visits to Ireland in the early 1930s.<sup>233</sup> The only artist of the group trained in Philadelphia itself, Kelly studied under Charles Grafly at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.<sup>234</sup> The artists' approaches to sculpture also varied – several were proponents of direct carving, the *animalier* Warneke has been cleverly described

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<sup>230</sup> Cunningham, 17; 20.

<sup>231</sup> Charlotte Streifer Rubinstein, *American Women Sculptors* (Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1990), 269-270.

<sup>232</sup> "Laurent, Robert," *Benezit Dictionary of Artists, Oxford Art Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/benezit/B00105296>.

<sup>233</sup> "Flannagan, John Bernard," *Benezit Dictionary of Artists, Oxford Art Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/benezit/B00065028>.

<sup>234</sup> "J. Wallace Kelly," Michener Museum, <http://www.michenermuseum.org/bucksartists/artist.php?artist=134>.

as a “linkman perhaps between Franz Marc and Walt Disney,”<sup>235</sup> Flannagan’s “primitivism” stands out, and Kelly practiced abstraction. However, their styles in the Central Terrace do converge in a harmonious way that lends credence to the idea of “painting Section.”

This sketch of the group’s heterogeneity gives some indication of why Sterne’s model for *Welcoming to Freedom* might, for example, look like Nazi Germany favorite Arno Breker’s *Der Sieger* (1939) or why Laurent’s *Spanning the Continent* may recall Rudolf Belling’s (deemed “degenerate” by the same regime) *Max Schmellig* (1932). However, a side-by-side comparison shows Sterne working in a less classicizing mode than Breker. The artists modeled similarly muscled bodies, but the poses in which Sterne ultimately situated his figures differ from the heroic triumphalism of Breker’s balanced nude. Sterne’s and Laurent’s style may have more in common with Belling’s, in the planarity of the facial features and modernist exaggerations of bodily proportions.

New Deal sculpture also shares characteristics with Socialist Realism, particularly in the elevation of the worker. However, New Deal art, and the Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial as an example, never evolved a cult of personality such as that around Joseph Stalin, nor was it directed towards revolutionary ends, nor did it denounce artists for exhibiting foreign influence. Stylistically, New Deal art exhibits greater openness to modernist gesture than its Socialist Realist equivalents. However, as the biographies of the Central Terrace sculptors show, international borders were

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<sup>235</sup> Philip Ward Jackson, review of *Heinz Warneke (1895-1983): A Sculptor First and Last*, by Mary Mullen Cunningham, *The Burlington Magazine* 137 (Dec., 1995): 857. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/886848>.

porous to artists, and they were also porous to artistic ideas. The Ellen Phillips Samuel Memorial directs an amalgamation of influences towards a thematically American program. Ultimately, the very eclecticism of the memorial contributes to its American identity.

Indeed, Samuel's will called for sculptures emblematic of American history. This mission resonated well with the goals of New Deal art during the decade in which the funds for Samuel's project finally became available for use. It provided an opportunity for reflection on the strengths of American history during an era of economic crisis. It allowed for a nostalgic, historical narrative that emboldened men through idealized representations and focused on the "common man" rather than any individual historical figure. The style in which the Central Terrace artists rendered their figures embodies 1930s "middlebrow" taste, with a flavor of modernity coupled with an unadulterated adherence to the human body as primary communicative form. Despite a level of conventionality in their figural compositions, the sculptors involved rejected the naturalism and straightforward allegory of the previous century's monuments, a style exemplified in the *James Garfield Memorial* (1893) by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, located directly across the street from the North Exedra, and much of Philadelphia's other public sculpture (Figure 66). Though to different degrees, all the Central Terrace artists rendered figures with comparatively reduced forms and simplified contours. In this, their work was inevitably informed but the currents of New Deal art circulating throughout the nation. Indeed, the cast of characters involved in the Samuel Memorial commissions included significant New Deal artists and administrators.

Labeling this project as “New Deal sculpture” argues for an expanded definition of New Deal art, one based not simply on the source of funding, but on deeper historical, ideological, thematic, and stylistic trends, as explored in Chapters One and Two. Accordingly, we can look to the Samuel Memorial commission to reveal instances of the tensions, complications, and limitations inherent in some of the animating ideas of New Deal art, as I have attempted to do particularly in Chapter Three.

Writing in 1995, Jonathan Harris proposed that the history of New Deal art had been largely overlooked, and even scorned, by art historians. He summoned scholars to look at “the 1930s as a specific period with specific problems,” not simply as a sort of black hole in the history of abstract art and modernism.<sup>236</sup> Harris and others have looked more closely and more critically at the government’s unprecedented involvement in the visual arts during this decade. Their findings show that the result of this government involvement was diverse and complex in terms of the art to come out of it, but that certain characteristics and values bind much of the visual production together – a stylistic trend towards the figurative and the legible; a thematic preoccupation with the muscle-bound male body; an intellectual concern with creating a comprehensible history of the United States and defining American citizenship; and an ideological promotion of the principle of “cultural democracy.”

We can also find these characteristics and values in the art of the decade created outside the auspices of government involvement. Specifically, to best understand a project like the Samuel Memorial, it must be placed firmly in its

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<sup>236</sup> Harris, 1.

historical moment. In return, studying the Samuel Memorial commission can contribute towards forming a fuller understanding of New Deal art.

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