

Concetta Scaravaglione, 1900 - 1975

At a Meeting of the
Faculty of Vassar College
held

May eleventh, nineteen hundred
and seventy-seven, the following
Memorial

was unanimously adopted:

For sixteen years, from 1952 until 1967 - Concetta Scaravaglione was a part-time Lecturer in the Art Department. Coming up by train each week from her studio-home in New York City, she taught the art of sculpture, quietly and sensitively, encouraging her students to find their own way rather than to echo her own. Concetta was a small, but wiry and energetic woman, with a piquant sense of humor. She was warm-hearted and affectionate, but she was primarily a determined creative artist with a steady and serious regard for the integrity and significance of her craft.

Concetta Scaravaglione was born in New York on July 9, 1900, one of nine children of Italian parents. As a very young girl she expressed an interest in art and at 16 she entered the National Academy of Design and later at the age of 21 she studied at the Art Students League. Before coming to Vassar in 1952, she taught at the Educational Alliance in New York, the Masters Institute in New York, New York University, Sarah Lawrence and Black Mountain College. Her distinction was recognized many times: in 1935 she was awarded the Widener Gold Metal at the Pennsylvania Academy of Arts and Letters; she received a grant from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1945 and in 1947 she was the first woman to receive the Prix de Rome for study of the fine arts at the American Academy in Rome. In the late 50's and 60's she served frequently as a judge in art contests in New York State and New Jersey. Her sculptures were exhibited widely: at the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum, the Chicago Art Institute, the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, Pennsylvania Academy, Brooklyn Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Arizona State College, Dartmouth, the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario, the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum all own examples of her work.

However, those of us who were at Vassar in 1967 remember with pleasure the retrospective exhibition of Concetta's sculpture held in the Art Gallery. She modelled in clay, she carved in wood and stone, she cast bronze and she was one of the first American sculptors to explore the technique of welding metal. One of the most expressive and haunting examples of her work - a large Woman Walking in copper (1961) - stands today in

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the Vassar Art Gallery. When applying for a leave in 1962, Concetta wrote as follows: "I wish to refresh and extend my knowledge of classical works of art. In order to do this, I will travel for the first time to Greece and Crete and visit again

such places as Paestum and Florence, Italy." Indeed a kind of classical spirit is always felt in her art: the human figure was her special subject; it is always recognizable; movement, tension yet clarity of feeling are conveyed by her often elongated forms. During an interview with a reporter from the Magazine of Art Concetta once said: "If, in the ordered work of sculpture, I can convey something of my unconscious conception of beauty, and my absorbed enjoyment in the work, if the stone or the clay or the wood is not too obstinate, if it seems to be on friendly terms with me, then I am profoundly happy."

Concetta died of cancer on September 24, 1975, in New York.

Leila C. Barber

Christine M. Havelock

Linda Nochlin Pommer

May 11, 1977