

LOUIS ROSENTHAL

(1888 – 1964)

The Louis Rosenthal Museum

The Louis Rosenthal Museum is an online museum created by his granddaughter, Sharon Quigley-Rosenthal

www.louisrosenthalmuseum.org

In 1923 the Royal Society of Miniature Painters changed their name/charter to the Royal Society of Miniature Painters & Sculptors solely to allow in one American: Louis Rosenthal.

The recently published book, "Modern Masters of Miniature Art in America" by Wes Siegrist refers to Louis Rosenthal as "the father of miniature sculpture." In the 1920 – 1950's, Rosenthal received international acclaim for creating miniature sculptures many no more than an inch in height.

Louis Rosenthal immigrated from Lithuania to the United States in 1907 when he was 19. He attended the Maryland Institute College of Art on full scholarship. After graduation he set up an art studio on Charles Street in Baltimore City, Maryland USA.

Utilizing a simple pearl-handled penknife as his sole tool he built up his tiny figures from wax and cast them into bronze himself as no foundry anywhere in the world could work with figures so small.

In 1924, the Jacques Seligmann Gallery on 5th Avenue in New York City exhibited a collection of 40 of his miniature sculptures for the first time. The next morning as Rosenthal stood alongside a person holding a New York Times he was quietly astonished to discover his name was in the headlines of the Art Review Column. Unable to lavish 2 cents on the newspaper he ran 38 blocks to the reading room of The New York Public Library where he read an art critic's praise of his work. He later learned that almost all 40 of his miniatures were sold that evening. During the 1920's, other galleries in New York City continued to exhibit his miniatures.

A partial review of that first exhibit in 1924 is reprinted here: *An extraordinary exhibition, which would undoubtedly cause the great Cellini a quarter of an hour's anxiety were he to venture to the Jacques Seligmann Galleries at this moment, reveals the talents of Louis Rosenthal, whose remarkable miniature sculpture is being introduced to New York by Mrs. Marie Sterner.....there is nothing quite like this minuscule manifestation of art to be seen today.* (Reprinted from "A Collection of New York Reviews from 1924 – 1926" which can be found on the Art Reviews Page at www.louisrosenthalmuseum.org)

Museums and galleries in London, New York, Washington D.C., and Jerusalem exhibited his works, and his miniatures are in the permanent collections of many museums today.

Greatly admired in England, he held exhibitions at the Gieves Art Gallery, the National Gallery and the Gibbs Gallery in London. He also held exhibitions at the Metropolitan in New York, the Corcoran in Washington, D.C., the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Walters Art Gallery in Maryland and permanent collections reside at the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Smithsonian, the Jewish Museum of New York and Maryland and the Maryland Historical Society.

Dignitaries, celebrities and artists from around the world traveled to the modest studio on Charles Street to see the art and meet the man who locally was fondly referred to as 'the artist who carries a museum in his pocket'.

In the 1920's, Alyn Williams and William Aumonier visited with him in his studio. Even Mae West made the trip up to his studio to meet him. Correspondence from Mr. Williams and Ms. West is presented on the website.

In addition to hundreds of miniatures, Rosenthal also created larger works which include the Lindbergh Memorial, the Monument to Balfour, and figures of Edgar Allan Poe, Beethoven and Mae West.

The Lindbergh Memorial, known as "The Spirit of St. Louis" is one of Rosenthal larger works yet has 85 miniatures contained within in. A symbolic group of 85 figures depicts Charles Lindbergh's triumph including a record of the historical amity between France and America. Two were cast, one in gold and one in bronze and presented to the Lindbergh family and the government of France. Photographs of 'the Spirit of St. Louis' is presented on the website.

In January 2010, Sharon Quigley-Rosenthal, granddaughter of Louis Rosenthal created an online museum as a tribute to her grandfather so once again the world can share in the joy of viewing the miniatures.

The historical, mythological, spiritual, musical, and often satirical significance of his miniatures expands a vast terrain and it is striking to watch the miniatures he created many years ago be given a new life today.

The online museum includes the page: Casting Wax into Bronze: A handwritten note is posted which is written by Bernard Rosenthal, the son of Louis Rosenthal, which details the process of how Rosenthal casted his miniatures into bronze.

Ms. Quigley-Rosenthal's future interests include preparing a book about Rosenthal which would be comprised of a photographic compilation of his works, as well as setting up a permanent physical location for the Louis Rosenthal Museum.

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I hope you have enjoyed the exhibition of Louis Rosenthal miniatures today. Enjoy browsing the online museum. I welcome your thoughts and comments. There is an Online Guestbook if you would like to post comment online.

- Sharon Quigley-Rosenthal