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Press Release:

Anne Harvey & Raymond Mason: *In Paris*

October 19 - December 10, 2022

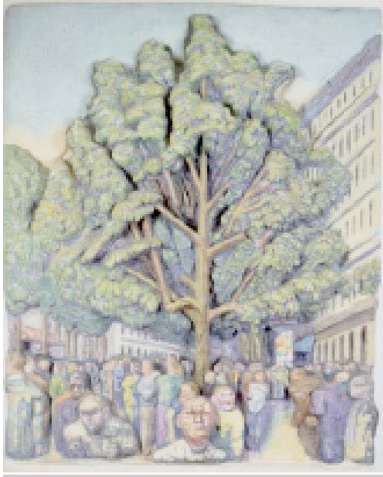
Reception: Sat. Oct 22, 4-7pm

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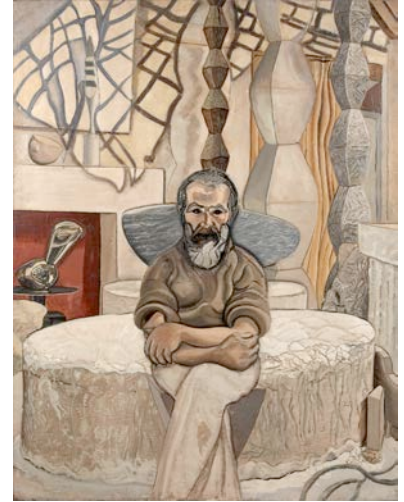
208 Forsyth St

New York, NY 10002 917-861-7312

info@shfap.com, www.shfap.com



Raymond Mason, *The Month of May in Paris*, 1968
coll: The William Louis-Dreyfus Foundation



Anne Harvey, *Portrait of Brancusi*, 1934
coll: Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation

SHFAP presents *In Paris*, a two-person exhibition of works by American painter Anne Harvey (1916-1967) and English sculptor Raymond Mason (1922-2010). Both spent the majority of their working lives in Paris and captured their adopted city with extraordinary detail and verve. Anne and Raymond were prodigies. Raymond's subject was humanity - people in urban settings - while Anne often painted empty interiors, every inch of the canvas brimming with observed detail. They both found unique ways to utilize the language of perception.

Born in Chicago, Anne's early skills were nurtured by her culturally progressive family. In his essay from the catalog for *In Paris*, Henry Lessor writes "Anne's original talent alone would have made her remarkable; it is the fact that from almost the beginning it was surrounded and nurtured by genius which made it something more than that." Her mother, Dorothy Dudley Harvey, was a poet, critic and author of the first biography of American writer Theodore Dreiser. Dorothy's sister, Katharine Dudley, was close to the center of Parisian artistic and intellectual life, with friends including Gertrude Stein, Alice B Toklas and Brancusi. Katharine introduced Anne to Jules Pascin, who drew her when she was twelve. Another aunt, Helen Dudley, was also a poet, as well as the doomed lover of English philosopher Bertrand Russell. A third aunt, Caroline Dudley (later married to the French writer Joseph Delteil) was the theatrical impresario who brought Josephine Baker and the Revue Negre to Paris. Anne attended Fernand Léger's art school before her aunt Katherine introduced her to Constantin Brancusi, who became her mentor. While discussing Dorothy Dudley's projected article about his Barnes's murals, Henri Matisse looked at Anne's work. He responded by encouraging her towards illustration, praising the element of "fantasie" in her work. She responded by stating her intention to be a painter. In a rare statement about her own art, Anne mused:

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A painter should first become his model (nude or cabbage) and then the model should be transformed into the painter so as to become impossible to recognize. At least, that's my idea for the moment.

This exhibition includes Anne's large oil portrait of Brancusi in his studio, painted circa 1934 when she was eighteen years old. This portrait, which hasn't been seen in New York for twenty years, is a rare life portrait of Brancusi. As Sidney Geist notes, it shows him (accurately) as small in stature. Anne developed the painting from a drawing, about one-third the size of the finished piece, also on view, as well as a portrait photograph taken by Brancusi himself. Henry Lessorre writes:

Anne told Raymond Mason that her portrait was done in Brancusi's studio when she was 18. Since there are several differences between photograph and painting – pieces of sculpture moved and so on – one supposes that Brancusi sat for her a little while, in the pose shown, and that the rest of the time Anne worked from the room itself and the photograph. (Mason himself says that the portrait was also worked on – touched up, or corrected – by Brancusi himself.)

In the 1940s, Anne Harvey was the only artist to participate in both of Peggy Guggenheim's exhibitions of women artists - *31 Women* in 1943, and *The Women* in 1945.

Raymond Mason (six years younger than Anne) did not arrive in Paris until 1946. He was born into a working-class family in Birmingham, England; his father was a motor-mechanic and his mother the daughter of a pub owner. When he was only 15, Raymond received a scholarship to attend the Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts and later studied briefly at the Royal College of Art and at the Slade School. Early on Raymond was profoundly influenced by the likes of Giacometti, Balthus and Picasso. His bas relief sculpture, *The Man in the Street (L'homme dans la rue)* from 1952, established his figural sculptural path. His depictions of urban life, often in low relief, were first created in plaster to be then cast in bronze. By the late 1960s, Mason began working in epoxy resin which he would paint in saturated colors. In addition to sculpture, he created detailed drawings and watercolors, examples of which are included in the exhibition. Art historian Sarah Wilson writes of the elegiac quality of Raymond's depictions of Paris, saying that he was committed to "the long humanist tradition of representation in paint, clay, plaster and bronze, of relief as commemoration, of sculpture as public monument." She describes the volatility of the Paris he encountered as a young man, returning to life in the aftermath of Nazi occupation and navigating the crisis of the modern age. Mason's mission is evident in *The Month of May in Paris*, also on view, a painted epoxy low relief depicting the May 1968 student protests which occurred near his studio. He wrote of the large tree that dominates the composition as "sprouting out of the head of the foremost protagonist like a thought of liberty."

Not only were Anne and Raymond united in their status as expat artists finding inspiration in Paris, they also ran in very similar circles. It was Katharine Dudley who introduced Raymond to such important figures as Alexander Calder and Dora Maar when he first made his way to the

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city as a young man. Taking his example from friend and mentor Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966), Mason was ascetic in his working habits yet dedicated to “the ritual of Parisian café life.”

In 1961, Raymond and his wife Janine Hao showed Anne’s work at the Galerie Janine Hao that they had started in 1960. It is from this show that Giacometti purchased a painting by Anne. Two works owned by Giacometti and his wife, Annette, are featured in the publication for *In Paris*, reproduced in color for the first time. John Ashbery published a review of this show for the Paris Herald Tribune, writing:

Miss Harvey paints such ladylike subjects as a bowl of roses, a garden path or a copper teakettle on a hearth. But the coziness is only superficial, as in Henry James’s “The Turn of the Screw,” which these paintings curiously remind me of. In following the tortured curve of a petal or a sinuous highlight on a copper bowl, Miss Harvey transmits a secret metaphysical anguish to the spectator.

In Paris presents the works of two friends and expatriates in post-war Paris. Both Raymond and Anne expanded the tradition of art based on observation, demonstrating formal virtuosity and profound inventiveness, though in quite distinct ways. Drawing was integral to both artists’ process, and was perhaps their primary mode of seeing and documenting life, as well as building their larger works, but their personalities could not have been more different. Raymond was known as a gregarious man, one excited to immerse himself in the masses of people gathering outside his studio, while Anne became increasingly isolated in the years before her death, retreating into herself and her studio. Their work exudes an interest in the daily that transcends style or medium, and is perhaps best encapsulated in Mason’s declaration “We love the world... We will make human art.” This is a singular opportunity to compare and contrast their respective accomplishments.

The exhibition will be accompanied by the first publication on Anne Harvey’s work. This publication includes texts by Henry Lessore and Sidney Geist, as well as excerpts and published writing by Patrick Waldberg, Constantin Brancusi, Andre Masson, Lawrence Campbell, John Ashbery, Alexander Calder and John Yau. We wish to gratefully acknowledge the loan of works by Raymond Mason from The William Louis-Dreyfus Foundation and the loan of works by Anne Harvey from The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation.

Please contact Jenny Mushkin at jenny@shfap.com or 917-861-7312 for images or further information.