

THE LACHAISE FOUNDATION

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REMINDER

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GASTON LACHAISE'S *LA MONTAGNE (THE MOUNTAIN)* IN TRAMWAY PLAZA

New York City's Department of Parks & Recreation, The Lachaise Foundation and the Frelinghuysen-Morris Foundation are pleased to remind the public of the loan of *La Montagne (The Mountain)* modeled in 1934 by American Modernist sculptor Gaston Lachaise (1882-1935). The monumental bronze earth goddess lies at Tramway Plaza, located on Second Avenue between 59th and 60th Streets, where it is on loan to the New York City Parks Department from September 23rd until June 4th, 2012.

Born in Paris in 1882, Gaston Lachaise studied sculpture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, coming to the United States in 1906. He arrived in New York in 1912, and gained work with Paul Manship. He is known for his striking, voluptuous sculptures of women, they having been inspired by one woman, his muse model and wife Isabel. In 1935 the Museum of Modern Art gave Lachaise a retrospective exhibition of his work. He died later that year at the height of his career. The work of Lachaise's work can be seen at Rockefeller Center on the 6th avenue facade of the GE building; in the sculpture garden at Moma (Floating Figure 1927) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and at the Whitney Museum. This bronze cast, the second in an edition of five, was made in 2002 by the Modern Art Foundry. Measuring eight and one half feet long, weighing two and a half tons, *La Montagne* embodies the artist's adoration of Woman in monumental form and heroic proportions. Its silver nitrate patina recalls the cement material of the original work, which George L. K. Morris commissioned in 1934 for his estate in Lenox, Massachusetts, now the Frelinghuysen-Morris House and Studio).

Reclining below a canopy of honey locust trees at an angle between 59th street and Second Avenue, *La Montagne* infuses the small park under the Roosevelt Island tram and its passersby with a dose of tranquility. This veritable Mother Earth, mature and abstracted, looking East to the sun, might prove a rewarding contemplation for people in motion. In a place defined by movement--cars, trams, people — *La Montagne* is at once a destination and a voyage.

E. E. Cummings once likened Lachaise's work to a "slow arrow of beauty vigorously expressing something of a civilization of which speed seems to be the god." Lincoln Kirstein, a friend of the artist's and a founder of the School of American Ballet, described *La Montagne* as "the balance of breathing sumptuousness, a mountain raised into air, earth sharing the shape of clouds." (MoMA Retrospective, 1935).

The Lachaise Foundation serves to promote, protect and perpetuate the work of Gaston Lachaise for the public benefit.



City of New York
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