

Germaine Richier (French, 1902-1959)

[Richier at Lévy Gorvy](#)

[Richier at Tate](#)

[Richier at Centre Pompidou](#)

[Galerie Perrotin](#) and [Dominique Lévy](#) partnered in 2014 for the first exhibition of Richier’s sculpture in the U.S. in fifty years. Over forty sculptures traced her fiercely creative career depicting human and animal figures, with photographs of her at work captured by friend and fellow artist Brassai. “I think that when you stand in front of the work, you feel the deep existential loneliness, anxiety, fear, all these feelings that were so strong in the aftermath of World War II,” commented the curator in a [gallery introduction](#).

60 sculptures explored Richier’s thematic interests in her first retrospective in Switzerland during the first half of 2014 at the [Museum of Fine Arts in Bern](#). Switzerland was home to Richier during WWII, and she frequently ventured between Paris and Zürich during the last decade of her life.

Richier’s sculptures adorned the exterior courtyard of the [abbey at Mont-Saint-Michel](#) in 2017, creating a rare [dialogue between artwork and architecture](#) in which Richier’s commentary about her practice could be explored. “All my sculptures, even the most imagined, always start from something true, from an organic truth,” she explained. “Imagination needs a start. We can thus emerge straight into poetry. I invent more easily by looking at nature, its presence makes me independent.”

In 2020, the Hague’s [Museum Beelden aan Zee](#) celebrated the textured force and thematic nuance of Richier’s practice, it’s borrowings of and expansion upon human, animal, and organic forms as well as the raw materials – wax, sticks, wire, and glass – she worked with before casting her figures in bronze.



Richier in Paris, 1949
Photography: Rogi André



Richier, 1955 Photo: Brassai

Germaine Richier (French, 1902-1959)

La mante, grande, 1946

Bronze with brown patina

Private Collection; L2021:75.1

“All of my sculptures, even those that seem to contain the greatest amount of imagination, are based on something true, on an organic truth.” Born and raised in Southern France, Germaine Richier moved to Paris in 1926 to work as a sculpture studio assistant. Before escaping to Zurich during World War II, the Expressionist artist visited Pompeii, where she was fascinated by the lava-caked remains. **La mante, grande** was produced in Richier’s first year back in Paris after the Nazi occupation. Processing the horrific aftermath of war, Richier’s postwar sculptures turned to existentialist hybrid human-animal organisms. This sculpture was modeled after mantises from the Southern French village of La Paule, where Richier spent her childhood.

On view September 22, 2021 – January 2, 2022

