

Manships

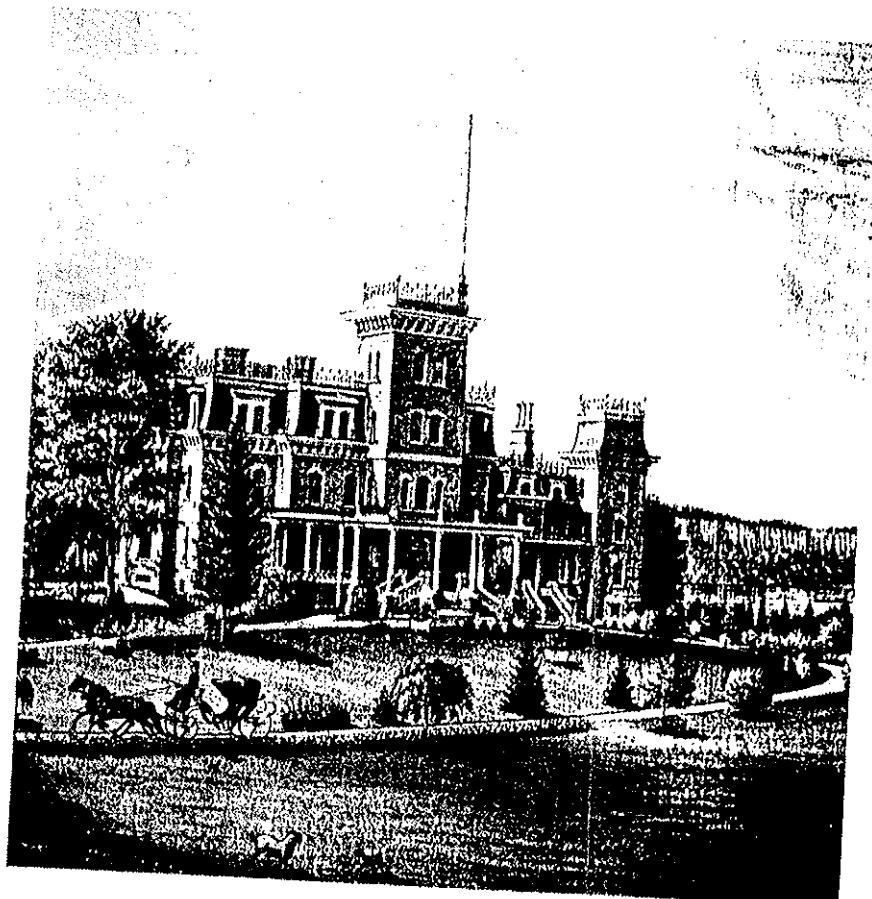
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Paul Manship and Samuel Untermeyer: A Sculptor and His Patron

A Bypassed Chapter in the Story of *Actaeon*

Jan Seidler Ramirez

Upon entering the Hudson River Museum, visitors immediately see the striking statues of *Actaeon* and *Diana*. Although the pair have been in the Museum's permanent collection since 1948, only recently have curators discovered missing pieces in the statues' past. The story of their commissioning, creation, and *Actaeon's* disappearance and recovery is told here.

Sometime during the late afternoon of October 7, 1939, Samuel Untermeyer was robbed—the victim of a brazen (and, in retrospect, brawny) burglar who invaded the grounds of Untermeyer's well-guarded Yonkers estate in pursuit of some unusual loot. This was no commonplace crime; no ordinary case of property pilfered from a prosperous Westchester County resident. House-breaking, in the technical sense, had not been committed. Curiously, the contents of Greystone, the sprawling 29-room mansion that dominated Untermeyer's 120-acre compound, remained untouched. This omission or detour would confuse investigators, for Untermeyer, a prominent financier and corporate attorney, was a connoisseur well-known for his impressive collection of fine paintings, old tapestries, antique clocks and jade. To a would-be thief, Greystone represented a veritable storehouse of *objets de virtu* that could be speedily pocketed and fenced at a profit.

Evidently neither old master nor finespun bibelot tempted the intruder. Improbably enough, the object of desire took the form of a 4½-foot tall, 250-pound, pseudo-archaic effigy of a minor mythological personality. Cast in bronze, this figure—an embodiment of the Greek huntsman *Actaeon*—occupied a conspicuous perch in an open-air theater that Untermeyer had incorporated into Greystone's elaborate landscaping.

Just how the thief managed to abscond, undetected, with this ponderous piece of garden garniture still defies explanation. In a report given to the Yonkers police, Untermeyer's grounds-keepers testified to having seen the statue in its customary roost around 4:30 that afternoon. By 6 p.m., however, it had mysteriously vanished, a loss noted by Untermeyer's son, Supreme Court Justice Irwin Untermeyer, during a stroll at sunset through the grounds. Fearing further piracy, Untermeyer's estate superintendent ordered the immediate removal indoors of *Diana*, *Actaeon's* sculptural companion and narrative counterpart, for safekeeping.

Estimating the figure's worth at nearly \$8,500, Untermeyer braced himself for the delivery of a ransom note (which never arrived). In the meantime, news of the

audacious abduction had leaked to the local press. Public interest in the affair intensified when Untermeyer announced a reward for any information leading to the statue's safe recovery. As a consequence, *Actaeon* earned the sort of instant celebrity accorded any target of an expertly plotted kidnapping.

For the record, it should be noted that this was not the first instance of sculptural foul-play to mar the tranquility of the gardens at Greystone. Twelve years earlier, workmen on the property had unearthed a Greek figure, reckoned to be an authentic antique. A critical controversy soon erupted among art experts until an investigation disclosed that the statue—a reproduction—had been stolen and buried by a butler in the employ of Greystone's previous owner, Samuel J. Tilden.

For those intrigued by the eccentric case of *Actaeon*, resolution undoubtedly came all too quickly. Anticlimactically, perhaps, the statue was redeemed from bondage in less than two weeks' time and returned to its rightful home. Thus ended the flow of speculative newspaper bulletins which had enthralled county residents since *Actaeon's* disappearance. The incident soon faded from public memory and would hardly merit retelling were it not for the peculiar method of the statue's near disposal and its subsequent apotheosis as a masterwork of modern American sculpture.

Of the statue's thirteen-day captivity, the following chain of events can be reconstructed. On October 16th, 1939, detectives acting on a tip converged on a rundown shack situated in a junkyard on the outskirts of New Rochelle. Wanted for questioning was the shack's forty-eight-year old occupant, John Almeider Real, who earned his living scavenging scrap metal and other recyclable refuse.

On first impression, this unassuming dump dweller probably seemed an unlikely perpetrator of a cunning art crime. Nevertheless, after intensive grilling by the police, Real was taken into custody and arrested on a charge of suspected felony. The missing statue, it turns out, turned up on Real's premises. More accurately, it turned up under his premises, having been buried four feet below ground in the mucky earth. Under pressure, Real admitted to knowing something about the missing statue's whereabouts, thereupon leading authorities to its subterranean hiding place.

The plot quickly thickened when someone came forward and confessed to having purchased the statue from Real, unaware that he was receiving illicitly procured goods. According to this unidentified informant—whom police described as a man of “excellent reputation”—Real had approached him, offering to sell some “old metal” at seven cents a pound. (Untermeyer reportedly expressed “mortification” upon hearing the measly terms of the transaction, which computed to a total outlay of \$17.50.) Shortly after concluding the deal, the purchaser, who traded in metals, had grown wary when he read an account of the recent robbery at Greystone. He promptly returned the bronze to Real, who in mounting panic decided to conceal this “hot” bit of metal underground.

When *Actaeon* was exhumed from its junkyard grave, an additional insult to its person was revealed. To the dismay of rescuers, the statue lay dismembered in four separate parts. Fortunately, however, the piece had been severed at its seams, permitting the sections to be rebolted and soldered without much difficulty. *Actaeon* thus was restored to a semblance of its former appearance, give or take a few dents and muddy bruises.

It is unknown whether or not Real masterminded the theft on his own. He refused to name any accomplices and would not divulge any details about the heist itself. He consequently served time for the crime, alone, at the Elmira reformatory.

Among the more puzzling aspects of this curious case was its bungled potential. From the standpoints both of publicity and personal gain, junkman Real failed to reap a profit from his misbegotten booty. Had he been a clever con-man, he might have attempted some sort of ruse to capitalize on the newsworthy nature of his exceptional haul, for in point of fact, his stolen salvage was a prime example of workmanship by the renowned American sculptor, Paul Manship (1885-1966), then at the zenith of his fame. Earlier on, Manship's spiralling career had received a modest boost from Samuel Untermeyer, who commissioned several items from the young sculptor to adorn the gardens at Greystone. Manship's preeminence at the time of the theft—he was the author of the monumental, gilded *Prometheus* (1924) at Rockefeller Center, among other celebrated statues—naturally lent this local incident a widespread, albeit short-lived, interest.

Paul Manship and Isidore Konti

Manship's meteoric arrival on the New York art scene twenty-five years before *Actaeon*'s miscarried adventure deserves some review. Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1885, in youth he aspired to a career in painting and graphic arts. With the discovery that he was color-blind, however, his ambitions shifted toward sculpture. To that end he moved East in 1905, wishing to avail himself of the plentiful professional training opportunities in the New York area.

Upon arrival in New York City, the young Midwesterner secured a position in the studio of Solon Hannibal Borglum (1868-1922), best remembered for his heroic equestrian monuments and vigorous tableaux of the Wild West. After a brief stint of formal study at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1906, Manship returned to New York and next apprenticed himself to the Viennese-born, French-trained, Isidore Konti (1862-1938), from whom he earned \$3 a day while learning basic studio procedures.

Parenthetically, it is worth noting that while Konti's studio was located in the City at 145 West 55th Street, the sculptor himself resided in Yonkers, on Riverdale Avenue, where he often extended hospitality to Manship. A number of local benefits accrued from Konti's long attachment to the Yonkers community. He executed at least three public monuments for the city—the Hudson-Fulton Monument on Warburton Avenue, the Soldier's and Sailor's Memorial on Larkin Plaza, and the Abraham Lincoln Figure for Lincoln Park. He also campaigned energetically on behalf of the formation of a bona fide community museum. This goal was achieved in 1922 when the city acquired the John B. Trevor mansion, Glenview, and its surrounding acreage for conversion into a public museum and park. A founding member of the Yonkers Art Association, the driving voice behind the opening of the Yonkers Museum of Science and Arts, Konti was honored with an appointment as Commissioner to the newly opened institution, which survives as the present-day Hudson River Museum.

Over the course of their nearly two-year association, Manship and Konti developed a multi-layered relationship, progressing from the traditional roles of employer-apprentice, and then mentor-protégé, to that of surrogate father and son. Konti pro-

vided his 23-year old assistant with a technical grounding that prepared Manship to meet the future challenges of his career with exceptional confidence and practical facility. Konti also persuaded Manship to enter the *Prix de Rome* competition for the American Academy in Rome, a prestigious scholarship that was awarded to his precocious pupil in 1909. The letters Manship dispatched to his former teacher while abroad attest to the affectionate, even paternal bond he had formed with Konti. "I have come to consider New York my home and you as my guiding star," he professed in one home-sick exchange. In another, written from Florence two years later, a more assured Manship confided: "You are the one man who knows sincerely my heart; my love; my weaknesses, my desires, and I am proud to have in you a sympathetic friend to whom I may confess."

Bolstered by Konti's professional support and warm personal interest, Manship set out to absorb all the lessons that his three-year fellowship in Rome had to offer. Mainly, he seems to have interpreted the appointment as an invitation to broaden his education through travel.

Like most of his colleagues at the Academy, Manship greatly admired the timeless beauty of Hellenistic sculpture, also esteeming the pious, yet passionate experiments of the Renaissance masters. But his numerous forays away from Rome, and to Greece in particular, also exposed him to less conventional influences that would exert a shaping force on his emerging sensibility as an artist. Specifically, he found inspiration in the rich tradition of "pre-classical" design he saw embodied in Archaic Greek sculpture, Minoan friezes, ancient Egyptian and Assyrian reliefs, Greek black-figure vases and Indo-oriental art. All these diverse impressions percolated through Man-



Konti with assistants in his New York City studio, c. 1909. Left to right: unknown assistant, Konti, Paul Manship, Raymond Friel.

Courtesy of The Hudson River Museum.

ship's imagination. By the end of his stay abroad, he had assimilated these eclectic sources and arrived at a mature approach to plastic composition that would win him recognition as a formidable new talent on the horizon of American sculpture.

Manship accomplished this feat, quite simply, by looking selectively and inventively backward rather than forward. He adopted a suave modelling technique and a stylized treatment of form that synthesized those archaic attitudes he had come to appreciate in the ancient sculpture of Greece and the Near East: a preference for strong, simplified silhouettes, a highly schematic interpretation of natural elements, an assertive use of flat, decorative patterning, a sensuous delight in sculptural surface, and a respect for the dynamic interplay of solid and void.

The timing of Manship's homecoming to New York in 1912 proved propitious. Bored with the predictable guise of Beaux-Arts sculpture, distrustful of the distorted drift of the period's vanguard sculptural experiments, the art public that greeted him was in a perfect position to embrace the easily tolerated change that Manship's sculpture represented.

Retaining the human figure as a familiar point of reference, Manship dazzled his contemporaries with his novel primitivism, impeccable technique, and slick, decorative style. Manship's brand of "new-old" art appeared at once powerfully original and yet respectful of tradition. Manship's career caught fire at once—measured by the cumulative string of awards and accolades his work attracted and by his phenomenal commercial success. At a one-man exhibition staged in New York City in 1916, Manship sold almost a hundred out of 150 pieces included in the show for sums averaging \$1000 apiece. The fact that his gravely elegant statuettes and large-scale compositions so agreeably complemented the domestic interiors and plazas and facades of the year's modern buildings heightened his popular appeal and also drew overtures from architects eager to enlist this new talent in their design projects. Late in life, Manship would credit his immense popularity to the fortunate convergence of public taste with his own private vision of art. "I had no great talent, but was free and unencumbered," he reflected; "I was the right man at the right time."

Greystone's Grecian Gardens

This cursory outline of Manship's early career may seem tangential to the tale of *Actaeon*'s kidnapping by a man unacquainted with the sculptor or his work. What fuses these separate stories together is the scene of the crime and the larger context of *Actaeon* within Manship's body of work.

By common consent, critics of Manship's generation recognized *Actaeon* and its pendant, *Diana*, as model specimens of a genre in which Manship excelled: open-air garden statuary. Some would argue that Manship's genius attained its apogee in this discrete branch of the American sculpture trade. The picturesque gardens at Greystone, widely acknowledged to be among the loveliest in America at the time of the statue's disappearance, provided an especially congenial backdrop for the display of Manship's sculptural forte. During his lifetime, Untermeyer generously opened these

the gardens during these hours of public admission had inadvertently drawn attention to the rich deposit of bronzes scattered through the estate, hence prompting Real's unwelcome visit.

The embellishment of private gardens with elaborate fountains and sculptural satyrs, nymphs, fauns and Pan-like figures was an ancient practice dating to Greek and Roman times. The custom experienced a renewal in Renaissance Italy, Georgian England, and France under the Bourbon kings. In the United States, the booming post-Civil War economy gave rise to a class of wealthy entrepreneurs equally attentive to garden traditions, particularly as they ordered the construction of sumptuous summer residences and baronial homes in suburban areas.

Inspired by the handsome grounds which enframed the grand villas and palazzos of Europe, these moneyed American landowners stood ready to lavish patronage on those who could render assistance in creating landscapes of comparable impression, where art and nature would commingle under a controlled plan. In the splurge of building that occurred almost continuously from the late nineteenth century through the 1920s, millionaire clients sought out the advice and services of the landscape architect, the nurseryman, and the sculptor of garden ornaments. Their skills remained in almost perpetual demand until the economic realities of the Depression made the upkeep of such commodious country seats impractical, if not impossible. Manship, however, managed a long and profitable ride atop this wave until it crested.

When Untermeyer first purchased Greystone at auction in 1899, at a bargain price (the previous owner had been Samuel J. Tilden, a governor of New York State and presidential contender in the election of 1874), its grounds were only partially cultivated. They were also a fraction of the acreage that Untermeyer would add and develop over the course of his forty-one year residency.

Although a lawyer by vocation, horticulture was Untermeyer's consuming avocation, and Greystone allowed him ample opportunity to indulge in this hobby with a passion. He approached the task of landscaping his vast parkland as a therapeutic outlet for the fund of creative energy his legal duties barely tapped. Untermeyer claimed to derive greater aesthetic pleasure from surveying his flower beds and shrubbery groves than from contemplating a great painting or listening to majestic organ music.

Evidence of Untermeyer's horticultural obsession abounded at Greystone. In its heyday, the estate boasted more than sixty greenhouses. Here, he would conduct various experiments in defiance of the climate of New York State. Figs, nectarines and exotic jungle flora thrived in his hot-houses, year round. Untermeyer is said to have particularly relished occasions when he could test the botanical wits of George Chisholm, his estate superintendent. Untermeyer used Chisholm, a Welshman trained in landscape architecture, as his principal sparring partner in his favorite game of Latin plant nomenclature. Like a witness under cross-examination, Chisholm would be challenged to spell and explain obscure botanical terms. Untermeyer also loved to give Chisholm periodic assignments of composing complex sculptures out of various floral species. Chisholm's masterpiece is reported to have been a chrysanthemum fabrica-
tion of the chrysanthemum growing on a bed of mountain laurel

changing these tropical boutonnieres as often as once every three to four hours. When he vacationed in California, Untermeyer's staff took pains to keep his boutonnière supply replenished by air-mailing him several dozen orchids a week. One presumes that it would have given Untermeyer pleasure to know that his funeral casket featured a blanket of three hundred orchids, together with ten thousand lillies-of-the-valley, all produced in the Greystone conservatories.

No landscaping trick or effect seemed to escape Untermeyer in the planning of his Yonkers showplace. Dense clusters of rhododendrons, broad lanes of boxwood and English hedge, elaborate monochrome perennial beds, brilliant bulb borders, thick carpets of wildflowers, cool rock gardens and vibrant plots of annuals were artfully interstrewn at Greystone with fountains, sundials, gazebos, fishponds, garden seats, boulder outcroppings, and even a Chinese pagoda. Approximately eighty bronze and marble statues, both of antique origin and modern manufacture, provided accents throughout the grounds, marking the ends of *alleés*, emphasizing the intersections of important vistas, and inviting the stroller to pause and ponder the tranquil beauty of a secluded dell or special garden corner.

Untermeyer's crowning achievement at Greystone was the terraced Grecian Gardens, which featured a formal series of walks, canals and lily ponds as well as a mosaic-paved temple and a classic swimming pool. To the north side of the complex stood a colonnaded amphitheater that Untermeyer built for his wife. A lover of music, she had expressed a desire for a place on the grounds where she could hold outdoor concerts and recitals by the leading opera stars of her era. Manship's contributions to this magical setting found an especially compatible stage in the Grecian Gardens, where *Actaeon* and *Diana* flanked the entranceway to the amphitheater.

Obviously the responsibility for transforming the stony terrain of Greystone into so bewitching a horticultural paradise did not fall to Untermeyer exclusively. Recognizing the need for expert guidance, he had entrusted the practical design of the grounds to Welles Bosworth (1869-1966). A prominent society architect whose landscaping opinions were solicited by many clients of Untermeyer's social strata, Bosworth had supervised the restorations of the palaces and gardens at Fontainbleau and Versailles, as well as the planning of Rockefeller's Kykuit in Westchester.

Bosworth had befriended Manship shortly after the sculptor's return from Rome, at the outset of his climb to fame. Over the years, he would steer a number of commissions in Manship's direction, including that for work on the facade of the Western Union building in New York City. In all likelihood it was Bosworth who encouraged Untermeyer to offer this promising newcomer the first of two sculpture commissions for Greystone, the initial order of 1917 being for a pair of monumental stone sphinxes designed to surmount two tall columns within the Greek Gardens. Aloft the shafts, these winged creatures appeared to guard the place like sentinels.

The remarkable grounds at Greystone were probably not unknown to Manship when he received the commission for the two sphinxes. Some years before, his teacher, Isidore Konti, had furnished Untermeyer with a large marble fountain figure—*The Brook*—which Manship undoubtedly saw *in situ* on one of his visits to Konti in Yonkers. Nor was Manship a stranger to the field of garden sculpture. That same year he had been engaged by Mrs. Rockefeller McCormick to execute a dozen figures of

Greek deities for her country home in Lake Forest, Illinois. Other prestigious commissions followed rapidly in the wake. Among the notable assignments undertaken by Manship in this period were sculptural projects for the Herbert Pratt estate, "The Braes," in Glen Cove, Long Island; the gardens of Mrs. E. H. Harriman at Arden, New York; the grounds of the William Mather mansion in Cleveland, Ohio; and multiple orders for ornamental lead vases, decorated terracotta flower boxes, and assorted free-standing figures for the palatial residence of Charles Schwab at Loretto, Pennsylvania. Manship's close friendships with a number of his generation's leading landscape architects surely contributed to this influx of work.

Acteon and Diana Commissioned

Manship's exotic sphinxes evidently impressed Untermeyer enough for him to extend patronage to the sculptor again in 1925, this time for a pair of bronze statues dramatizing the legend of Actaeon and Diana. These companion figures had been highly acclaimed in an exhibition held at the Scott and Fowles Gallery in New York that same year, where Untermeyer may have first admired them.

Of his original attraction to this ancient—and lurid—tale of revenge, and to mythology in particular, Manship recollects in a personal diary of 1949:

It seemed to me, from my modern point of view, that in the antics of the heroes and gods of the ancient Greeks, there is a considerable feeling of humor. My Diana and Actaeon were based on a well-known myth. The myths combine animal forms often with the human form, and I've loved that combination in subject matter. It is lots of fun.

Manship undertook the initial sketches for this projected group as early as 1917, but he revised the design repeatedly and did not arrive at an acceptable composition until four years later. The final model for *Diana* was realized in 1921, and the study for *Actaeon* was brought to completion two years later. As was customary in bronze casting practices, the sculptor modelled the pair with the intention of producing multiple editions in three graduated sizes: heroic (approximately 7-feet in height), half-scale (of which Untermeyer's set are an example), and a still smaller reduction. In the various versions he cast from these primary models, Manship also experimented with different alloys, surface treatments, and decorative effects, including traditional bronze, gilded bronze and nickel bronze, and the occasional use of inset colored enamels to accent the figures' eye sockets. Records indicate that Manship issued five sets of the figures in the half-scale size.

Manship conceived the pair as anecdotal complements, each piece playing its special role in illuminating the myth's plot and in reinforcing the group's stunning impact as an ensemble. According to Greek legend, Diana, the chaste goddess of the hunt, turned the hapless hunter Actaeon into a stag because he accidentally caught a glimpse of her, exposed, in her bath. Actaeon paid a gruesome penalty for his voyeurism, however innocent: once transmuted into an animal, Actaeon's pack of loyal hounds, no longer recognizing him, attacked their master.

Manship chose to portray the avenging Diana as she releases the magic arrow that will strike her prey, initiating Actaeon's metamorphosis from man to stag. As she turns

to fix her gaze on this target, her body, suspended in a leap above the ground, breaks into forward flight. A stylized forest plant unfurls beneath the goddess; a hunting dog, with bared teeth, races at her feet, echoing the sensation of her fleet, on-rushing assault.

Generally envisioned as a composition in one plane, *Diana* pays tribute to the frontal stance that so intrigued Mansfield in archaic Greek sculpture. The dialogue established between the figure's elegant form, or mass, and the open space enframing it, recalls the system of design that had informed Greek vase painting in ancient times. The conscious streamlining of Diana's silhouette, however, together with the figure's fluid surface contours and quality of motion, also reveals Mansfield's sympathy with the prevailing Art Deco style, then making its impression on contemporary American fashion, architecture and interior design. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the theme of Diana – in her various guises as goddess of the moon, the forest, the chase, and childbirth – enjoyed special currency among American sculptors in the 1920s. Presumably it was Diana's fierce independence, in addition to her versatile talents and svelte athleticism, that appealed to the period's modern feminine mood.

For *Diana*'s victim Mansfield adopted a slightly more complex composition, rich in historical allusions to past styles. The sculptor pictured *Actaeon* retreating from his arrow-wielding assailant in agonized flight. With body outstretched in a sharp diagonal, the figure appears to spring forward, as if in mortal pain. One of the hunter's hounds, with snapping jaws, launches an aggressive attack on *Actaeon* from the rear; another runs menacingly at his feet. The deer-like ears and antlers sprouting from his head presage the awful fate awaiting the hunter once his dogs pounce on him, tearing their master to pieces. In accordance with the peaceful ambience of the domestic garden, however, Mansfield has interpreted this violent theme in a formalized, highly controlled manner, not unlike the art of landscaping itself.



Temple in Greystone's Grecian Gardens. Courtesy Westchester County Historical Society.

As a group, the figure and hounds are an amalgam of ancient sculptural sources. As with *Diana*, the flatness of the composition, with few overlapping parts, creates a silhouette effect not unlike the stylized imagery found on Greek black figure vases. The decorative treatment of *Actaeon*'s tightly curled coiffure, together with his almond-shaped eyes and the planar modelling of his face, clearly invoke prototypes in archaic Greek sculpture. The solemn pantomime of his pained flight derives from mannered gestures seen in Indian and eastern Mediterranean sculpture; the so-called "flying gallop" pose of the lower hound has its direct model in Minoan-Mycenaean art. The rippled, schematic patterning of the dogs' manes calls to mind conventions used in Assyrian relief sculpture. In sum, *Actaeon* exemplifies Mansfield's imaginative harvesting and recombining of aesthetic principles that were elementary to plastic design in pre-classical times.

The Demise of Greystone

Lest the reader suppose that *Actaeon* and his attractive antagonist spent a serene retirement at Greystone after the commotion stirred up by John Almeider Real, it should be said that further trouble lay ahead for the pair. These difficulties stemmed in part from Samuel Untermeyer's own problems in arranging for the future preservation and upkeep of his beloved Yonkers property.

In his lifetime, the financier attempted to hand over the residence and grounds to his children, who were reluctant to assume the responsibility and hence transferred the estate back to their father. Untermeyer next tried to donate the place to the State of New York, the County of Westchester and the City of Yonkers, in that order, but all of these would-be legatees declined the gift, hesitant to allocate the necessary funds to maintain the site as a public park. Yonkers probably had the added incentive of not wanting to lose the yearly tax intake, averaging \$34,000, generated by the estate.

After Untermeyer's death in 1940, posthumous efforts were made by his children and executors to interest those localities that had refused the gift of Greystone in the financier's lifetime, but no resolution could be easily arranged. Greystone stood more or less empty, unoccupied by Untermeyer's heirs, who initiated a court fight with the city over the matter of declaring the estate a tax-exempt park. In the interim, vandals invaded the sadly neglected grounds and began to deface and dismantle much of its former contents. Eventually, Yonkers' officialdom was persuaded to accept a fraction of the estate's original acreage for use as a public recreational facility and reservation. The mansion itself was razed in 1948 and its unwanted furnishings were dispersed through auction. With the exception of the fifteen acres reserved as public parkland, the remaining grounds were subdivided into parcels and sold. The decline of the gardens accelerated as weeds and underbrush encroached, and as vandals continued their assault on Greystone's surviving outdoor statuary and architectural appointments. Happily, the downfall of Untermeyer Park was symbolically halted in 1974, and the fortunes of the gardens reversed, with the official designation of the site as a national landmark. Today, the refurbished Grecian Gardens at the former Untermeyer estate are a proud reflection of the original character and spirit of Samuel Untermeyer's unique creation.



These sphinxes were Manship's first commission at Greystone. Courtesy Westchester County Historical Society.

The fate of the artworks once strewn through the grounds seemed precarious when the City of Yonkers inherited the property in 1946. No practicable plan for safeguarding these treasures *in situ* emerged, and so in 1948—the year that saw the demolition of Untermyer's former residence—the Yonkers City Council authorized their sale at public auction. Bids were accepted from interested parties, and it soon appeared that *Diana* and *Actaeon* as a couple were headed for divorce, with *Actaeon* relocating to the West Coast. According to an item published in the *Herald Statesman* soon after the auction was announced, the city had received a serious offer for the statue from an individual representing an "undisclosed" corporation in Glendale, California. (The West Coast "suitor" was later identified as the Forest Lawn Memorial Park, whose trustees intended to use the afflicted figure of *Actaeon* as sepulchral decoration.) Fortunately, the bid tendered was preposterously low and thus overlooked.

The statues remained in limbo until H. Armour Smith, the alert and enterprising director of the nearby Hudson River Museum, caught wind of the matter and interceded on behalf of the sculptural pair, arguing the aesthetic importance of their per-

manent union. He approached Thomas V. Kennedy, then city manager of Yonkers, and proposed that the bronze couple be donated to the Museum. Smith's recommendation, thankfully, met approval from the City Council, who on June 8, 1948, passed a special ordinance (number 119-1948) granting permanent custodianship of the statues to the Museum. Initially, the statues took up a post watching over the entrance to Trevor Mansion. They have occupied various other niches within the Museum complex over the years, including a lengthy tour of duty in the open-air courtyard. There they endured considerable distress because of the region's acidic rainfall and vicissitudes of climate. Today, the pair resides safely indoors, within the Museum's main building.

Museum Discovers Actaeon's Lost History

From the moment of their arrival at the Museum, *Diana* and *Actaeon* have basked in the glow of perennial popularity with the visiting public. The Museum staff has long recognized their great importance and appeal, valuing the pair among the cardinal assets of the institution's permanent art collection. Individually and as a pair, the statues have been widely exhibited, locally as well as nationally. For example, *Actaeon* recently appeared in the show—as well as on the catalogue cover—of "Classical Myths in Western Art," an exhibition mounted by the Meadows Museum of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Together, the works travelled on loan to the Parrish Art Museum's 1985 exhibition, "Fauns and Fountains: American Garden Statuary, 1890-1930," presented in Southampton, New York. Versions of the pair also played a prominent role in the nationally touring retrospective "Paul Manship: Changing Taste in America," organized by the Minnesota Museum of Art and hosted by The Hudson River Museum in 1985.

With the revival of Manship's critical reputation over the past five or so years, the time seemed ripe for The Hudson River Museum to restore these celebrated bronzes to good condition and to retrieve their provenance from the Museum's singularly uninformative accession records. Incredibly, no documentation of *Actaeon*'s eventful theft, burial and exhumation ever found its way into these registrarial annals. Indeed, *Actaeon*'s remarkable "pre-history" seems to have eluded the official Museum memory altogether, especially after a new generation of curatorial staff, lacking personal recollection of both the incident and the convoluted path by which the statues came to the institution in the first place, assumed charge of the collection.

It was more or less by chance that *Actaeon*'s full biography came to light. In 1985, to prepare the pair for their debut on the national exhibition circuit, *Diana* and *Actaeon* were sent out for conservation to Tallix Foundry in Peekskill, New York. There, a sharp-eyed conservator, Douglass Kwart, observed in a preliminary treatment report that while both bronzes had suffered neglect and weathering over the years, their patination showed enough variation in color to suggest either "different alloy constituents in the castings" or "a differing set of conditions of display." *Actaeon*, he furthermore noted, was "in much worse condition" than its companion, showing an unusual number of surface dents and unexplained mineralized deposits.

Museum staff members who read the resulting treatment report attributed these variations to unknown factors in the statues' past care; possibly, to *Actaeon*'s more vulnerable placement and exposure to the elements when exhibited in the courtyard,

or to some mischief wrought by an unruly museum visitor. Months later, by a stroke of luck, several scrapbooks containing early press clippings about the Museum and its collections were uncovered in the attic eaves of Trevor Mansion. Curiosity compelled a modern scanning of the volumes. In the process, some yellowed newspaper clippings alluding to the robbery at Greystone quite literally fell into this otherwise unenlightened curator's lap. With inquisitive instincts provoked, a search through local papers of 1939 ensued, leading to the "recovery" of *Actaeon*'s somewhat sensational past. The account pieced together, needless to say, unlocks the mystery surrounding the physical peculiarities discerned during *Actaeon*'s recent restoration. Certainly the minor epic of the statue's abduction, entombment and resurrection deserves incorporation as a permanent footnote in *Actaeon*'s curatorial pedigree.

Suggested Reading

Brookgreen Gardens, Murrells Inlet, S.C., *Sculpture by Paul Manship*, 1938.

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Author's Note:

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