

JASON MCCOY GALLERY

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SIDNEY GEIST: SCULPTURE

March 20 – April 12, 2013



Jason McCoy Gallery is pleased to present *Sidney Geist: Sculpture*, featuring works from the 1940s through the 1980s.

A prolific sculptor, Sidney Geist (1914-2005) was never identified with any particular movement or style. Instead, he drew inspiration from different cultures and individuals, ranging from American Indian art of the Northwest coast to Picasso, David Smith and above all, Brancusi. In 1992, Geist reflected: *"For several years there probably wasn't a month when I didn't go to the basement room of the Museum of Natural History and see the Northwest Coast Indian sculpture. I got to know every piece. My work doesn't show it in design, but I thought that my feeling for wood, a certain weight, was indebted to that work—and to American folk art, some of it so pretty it looked like candy."*

Throughout his career, Geist preferred using natural materials, such as wood, stone and clay. Refusing to use machinery, he primarily focused on hand-carving wood and painting his works in bright colors. In fact, it was his bold use of color that often had a shocking public effect. When interviewed by Grace Glueck for Geist's 2005 New York Times Obituary, Hilton Kramer referred to Geist's unique use of color as his "greatest artistic achievement."

Since the 1960s, Geist increasingly wrote down thoughts on his work and the life of the artist in general. Contemplating sculpture in 1968, he noted: *"Sculpture should declare its difference from other objects, and offset the possibility of mistake as to its identity. It should repel the possibility of being used in some fashion or of being grasped like an object of use. It should demand and deserve special attention."*

Parallel to his art practice, Geist carried on extensive research into the life and work of Brancusi. He taught himself Romanian so he could visit the artist's native country, speak with officials and read untranslated documents. He published several books on the artist, including "Brancusi: A Study of the Sculpture" (1968) and the catalogue raisonné entitled "Brancusi: The Sculpture and the Drawings" (1975). In addition, Geist was a guest curator of the Brancusi retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago (1969-1970). His book "Constantin Brancusi, 1876-1957", was the catalogue for that exhibition.

Born in 1914, in Paterson, NJ, Geist spent a year at the Art Students League before working as a sculptor on the New Jersey Federal Arts Project of the Works Progress Administration (1938-1940). After serving in the United States Army in World War II (1943-45), he attended the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris (1949–50). In Paris, Geist became part of a group further including Al Held and Jules Olitski, who all showed their work in a small co-operative they founded in 1950, the Galerie Huit. Back in the United States, Geist had his first solo show, at the Hacker Gallery in 1951. In 1964 he helped to found the New York Studio School and served as one of its early directors. Geist has been the subject of several solo and many group exhibitions in the United States and Japan. This will be the second solo exhibition of Sidney Geist's work at Jason McCoy Gallery.

Please contact 212-319-1996 or info@jasonmccoyinc.com for further information.