

Paul Maximilien Landowski FRA
*1 June 1875 †10 April 1961

Paul LANDOWSKI was raised by his uncle after the death of his parents, a Polish colonel who had been imprisoned in Siberia by the Russians and escaped at the fourth time of asking crossing the continent of foot. His uncle eventually died of exhaustion. His eldest brother Ladislaus continued the upbringing of his siblings Joseph, Henry, Benjamin and Wanda whilst still continuing his own career in medicine.

Paul discovered his true vocation as a result of a childhood accident in Algiers. His brother was trying to get rid of some mosquitoes by throwing lighted matches on the gunpowder and the explosion blinded the five year old Paul. During his convalescence he kneaded shapes in breadcrumbs and wax to pass the time. His natural

gifts were in part due to his heritage. His mother was the Austrian pianist Fannie EDER and his father the Belgian Violinist and composer Henry VIEUXTEMPS. He studied at the College of Fine Arts where RUDE and CARPEAUX worked.

He inherited their artistic genes more than their actual techniques. He also took up boxing at this point, which later gave him the necessary background for some of his sculptures.

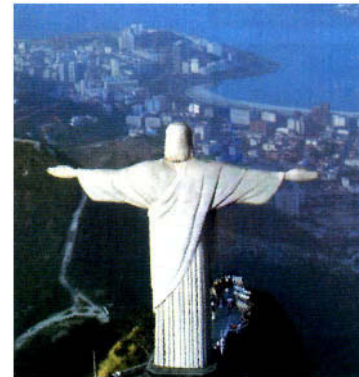
By the time Paul was 25, he had been living for a while at the Villa Medici in Rome. This was an enclave of French artists of Italian heritage. While there he won the Grand Prize in Rome for his Fighting David, a sculpture of a rebellious David. Next, he spent two years in North Africa where in pursuit of the thrills of life he often risked bringing his own life to an abrupt end.

In 1906 his sculpture titled The Sons of Cain was triumphant at the Salon in Paris. Immediately his first commissions began to appear. Then World War One broke out. As a soldier he received the Citation of the Order of the Artillery

Brigade and the Croix de Guerre in the battle of the Somme. But more than anything else the war left him with one vision, the dead lying side by side, and he promised to himself that if he came back safely he would honour the fallen. Not long after the end of the war, a dramatic monument was erected on the knoll of Chalmont in the precise



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Christ the Redeemer
Rio de Janeiro



The Boxer

place where the fate of the second battle of the Marne turned. Eight giants with frozen eyes carved in red granite stone, the defenders of France standing in eternal vigil. The Ghosts of the Marne, or more simply, The Ghosts was LANDOWSKI'S way perpetuating the memory of his fallen comrades. This is also perhaps the inspiration for his Christ the Redeemer standing high atop a mountain overlooking Rio de Janeiro's Bay of Corcovado and what would become one of the most world's most famous statues.

In 1921 the most famous boxer of the day, Georges CARPENTIER, posed for the statue that later won LANDOWSKI an Olympic Gold Medal in the Art Competitions of 1928 Amsterdam as The Boxer. He accepted the post of Director of the Villa Medici with some hesitation, and as World War Two began he fought hard to save its artistic activity.

After the war he returned to the studio and made sure artistic activity resumed. Once again he was in demand but found time to write a book Can the Fine Arts be Taught?, which Editions BAUDINIÈRE published in 1948. He worked into his eighties, still at a great pace but suffered a heart attack on March 31 1961 and died ten days later. (WZ)