

JOHN W. RHODEN'S SCULPTURE EXHIBIT

The American sculptor John W. Rhoden, now visiting here, has an extremely interesting exhibit of his works in the quarters of the Finnish-American Society at Satamakatu 2 A. For practical reasons the selection is limited, consisting of seven sculptures and a number of photographs, but sufficient to give a picture of his artistic genre.

Rhoden's art reveals an unusually happy combination of the aspirations of modern sculpture toward abstraction and a powerfully inspired "primitive" force of forms. The main stress lies on the latter, on the best achievements of Negro art, on their unsophisticated plastic expressiveness. In their purest shapes these motives are revealed in Rhoden's wooden Fecundity Fetish which well might be imagined a part of an old cultural construction in black Africa. The sound, intuitive weight proportions of forms and masses have been found with the same inherent feeling for style as is present in the performances of some unknown master of Benin bronze.

In his metal works, Rhoden has developed his own technical method to serve his purposes. He builds the skeleton of his "sculptures" from metal wire and constructs forms around it little by little. The wire construction, however, remains more or less visible, with some air space inside the forms, so that the works seem to bear relationship to the principles that we see in the fall in the Parisian modernistic sculptures at Salon de Main. We are especially reminded of the works of Costa Coustentance and Germaine Richier. But there are differences, too. The aspects that in Paris seem expressions of theoretical brooding and intellectual analysis, Rhoden solves with the freshness of nature, with a deep insight into the motif. His animal works breathe masculine strength. Deeply pronounced stylization, his Bull is not a construction, but a bull which magnificently throws up his hind leg and bellows. Even more impressive than this is Rhoden's Horse, intense in its forms and expressive from every angle. The motion of the "Angel on Tight Rope" has been pictured with spirit and with rhythms, as well as that of another dancing female figure. "Torao Doo", shaped in a normal fashion from aluminas, strives at massive, more abstract form dynamics, and remains one of the corresponding creations by Jean Arp.

The exhibit, which was opened last Friday, will be closed already tomorrow, for the artist will continue his trip to Istanbul and from there to Africa. Thank you for your visit, Mr. Rhoden!

Olli Valkonen