

# Master of form

The work of **Carl Milles** on display at Millard Sheets Gallery

By Priscilla Fleming Vayda | Correspondent

**S**WEDISH-BORN Carl Milles began his illustrious career in Paris in 1897, where he worked as an assistant to the great sculptor Auguste Rodin. Traveling extensively, he spent his days sculpting in Paris, Munich, Italy and Stockholm, eventually settling in the United States in the 1930s.

For 20 years, he taught at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. During that time, he created a reputation as both a teacher and sculptor, and was commissioned to design numerous public and private projects.

This retrospective exhibition, which has been touring the United States for the past two years, and is now at the Millard Sheets Gallery, consists of 40 bronze sculptures, maquettes (models) and 21 drawings.

Milles was known for the fountains and major monuments he sculpted for towns across the United States and Europe. Because Milles was commissioned so many fountains, two have been placed in the gallery, said Christy Johnson, Millard Sheets curator.

The first, depicting a graceful water nymph riding on a dolphin, greets visitors in the front entrance. "Sunshine," Johnson said, is one of Milles' most important pieces. "He was moving away from Rodin's style, becoming more refined and developing his own style."

A second fountain, "Europa and the Bull," is installed in the main exhibition hall. The inspiration for this 1926 work comes from mythology, one of Milles' favorite subjects.

Gallery walls are painted in shades of gray and a dark orange, all done in a faux-style resembling marble. In fact, the whole exhibition takes on the flavor of the home Milles called Millesgarden. Located on a Stockholm island, Millesgarden is now a

museum filled with Milles' work.

The exhibition is titled "The Master of Form," and, indeed, Milles mastered many forms of sculpting — from his first rough-hewn works influenced by Rodin, to later classical figures influenced by Greek and Roman sculpture and finally totally modern works. Curator Johnson particularly likes "Women in the Wind," which is done in the style of Rodin. Three figures are bent against the wind, and the whole thing is about the body. The body language is wonderful.

"It is one of my favorite pieces," Johnson said.

"Visitors to the exhibition should study the body of his work, and follow the way his work evolved from one style to the next. The way the exhibition is laid out, one

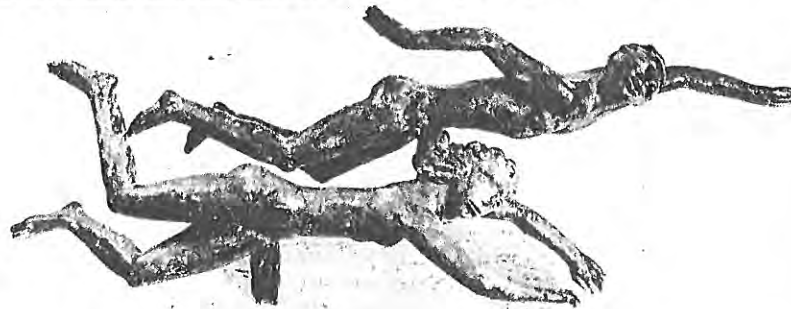
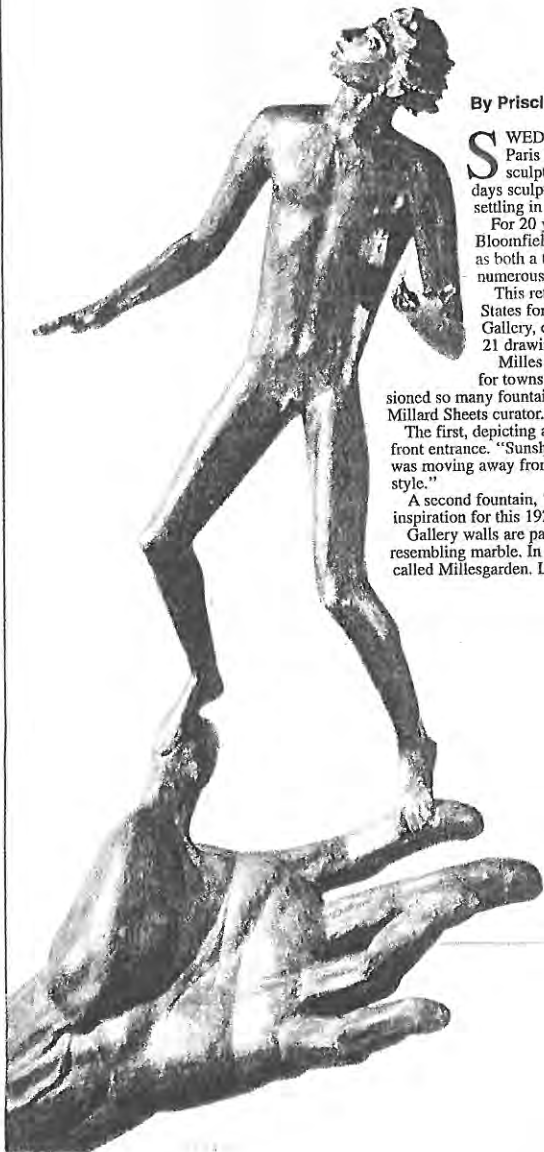
can see the progression of his work."

Milles sculpted a wide range of subjects, from animals to biblical characters, from gods and goddesses to everyday mortals. And the exhibition drawings offer a nice insight to how he worked, from the conception of a project to the final piece.

"The work is remarkable," said Johnson, "every piece of bronze has a wonderful patina, each different, from deep black to a turquoise blue-green, and even within that there are different shades."

Group and school tours are available by calling the gallery office. There are hands-on activity for families at 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

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## carl milles

Evening

- "Fountain of God," 1902-1905
- "Columbus' Galleon," 1906
- "Wild Boar," 1910
- "The Second Fountain," 1913

## visual arts

- The Master of Form: Carl Milles
- Millard Sheets Gallery, February 1101 W. Millport Ave., Pomona
- 25
- 11 AM-5 PM, Thursday through Monday 31
- (909) 862-4560