



Sybil Le Brocquy

Date

1973

Primary Maker

Melanie Le Brocquy

Medium

Bronze

Dimensions

34 x 28 x 36.5 cm

Description

This head and shoulders portrait of the artist's mother is a small intimate work. The piece has a strict frontal format, the features are distinct, submerging into the clay, in the

manner of the Italian sculptor Medardo Rosso. Le Brocquy is interested in texture and process; this head was modelled in clay and the process of construction is still clearly visible in the finished bronze. Her technique is additive, the clay was built up piece by piece. The neck and hair are more freely modelled, which creates a more interesting and varied surface structure. Le Brocquy is quite conservative in her style, little influenced by the developments that had taken place in sculpture in the 20th century. She continues to use traditional materials but her emphasis is on remaining true to the individual materials rather than attempting naturalism. The sitter 'Sybil Le Brocquy' (1892-1973), the mother of the artist, was one of the original committee members of the Irish Exhibition of Living Art. In 1942 there was a mounting tide of criticism of the RHA's refusal to show modernist work. When Louis Le Brocquy's painting 'The Spanish Shawl' was refused, Sybil Le Brocquy suggested holding an alternative exhibition. This was not to be a salon des refusés but an exhibition with official backing. The idea was popular among the modernist artists, a committee was established with Mainie Jellett as its chairperson and the first exhibition opened at the National College of Art, Dublin in September 1943. (Extract from 'Images and Insights', Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin, 1993, p. 132)