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## MacNeils Pursue Artist's Life In Pleasant Studio



Here are Mr. and Mrs. Hermon MacNeil and a corner of their cheerfully cluttered studio at Pinebluff. MacNeil, one of the "greats" of American sculpture, is also a painter, and on the walls are samples of his work and those of his friend, John Ormiston. At the extreme left may be seen two Ormiston water colors, scenes near Southern Pines. Both artists have wintered here for many years. (Photo by Emerson Humphrey.)

### Noted Sculptor, Hermon MacNeil, Relaxes Happily at Pinebluff Home

by Valerie Nicholson  
One of the world's greatest sculptors is living quietly in the little village of Pinebluff, near Southern Pines—working when he feels like it, but mostly just relaxing, enjoying the people and the serenity, the longleaf pines and the weather.

Yes, the weather, even when it isn't the kind that the Chamber of Commerce ordered. Hermon Atkins MacNeil has a love for this country which has brought him back year after year for the winter and spring to his Pinebluff bungalow home, with its back yard studio.

Talking to this gay, charming and unassuming man, you'd never guess, from him, that his work is in every important museum in the country, and in parks and public buildings from coast to coast; that his name is in the Encyclopedia Britannica, in Who's Who—and in every who's who of art, including those which seldom assign importance to anyone living.

You'd never guess, either, that he's in his 81st year, except that his work totals up to more than can be done in just a few years. He's young in looks, manner and vision, and you have the feeling that his best work is yet to be.

#### Two Artists

Just now he's gone back to painting, and every day finds him in the studio. In fact, you'll find two artists there, for his friend John Ormiston, of Newfoundland, N. J., who winters in Southern Pines, is with him often, and the two take joy in each other's company.

MacNeil at his oils, Ormiston at his water colors, stimulate each other and also the incoming guest, who hears each sing the other's praises while keeping mum about his own achievements.

The studio walls give testimony to those of both. Early this month the MacNeils staged an Ormiston exhibit, along with a tea, honoring also their house guests, Dr. and Mrs. Riley of New York. The studio was shined up, and the artists swapped their customary old corduroys for "company clothes" in deference to the occasion. Everyone had a wonderful time.

Ormiston's water colors, scenes around Southern Pines and also of the Virginia and New Jersey seacoasts, were ranged along one wall. On another they ran into MacNeil paintings in an inextricable blend.

#### Friendship and Art

And that's the way the two friends are. Their conversation goes in counterpoint punctuated with their echoing wit, wisdom and laughter. You listen, you laugh—and you wind up with the idea that friendship is wonderful, art is fine, and the two together are an unbeatable combination.

MacNeil points out the strength and subtlety of Ormiston's colors,

the way he captures the "feel" of a countryside. Ormiston glows with pride in MacNeil's work, and hauls out a scrapbook containing photographs of his major pieces.

Probably the best known of these is the eastern pediment of the Supreme Court building in Washington, D. C.—10 figures in a vast triangular composition. This was completed some eight years ago.

Born in Chelsea, Mass., MacNeil graduated from Massachusetts State Normal, then taught industrial art for two years at Cornell university. He then went to Paris, and studied sculpture under Henri M. Chapu and Falguiere. Winning the Rinehart scholarship to Rome, he studied and worked for four years in that sculptor's paradise.

He was elected to the National Academy in 1906.

#### Indian Sculptures

Back in America, his interest was captured by an Indian model he used in Chicago, and he went to Arizona for further study of the Indians. From this sprang a series of some of the most beautiful of American sculptures, on which his earliest fame was based, such as "The Moqui Rayer for Rain," now in the Chicago Art Institute; "Primitive Chant," in the Metropolitan Museum of Art; "The Sun Vow," probably the best known, in the Metropolitan, the Corcoran Art gallery and other museums, with dozens of copies also in private hands; "Moqui Runner," "The Snake Dance" and others, showing the splendid grace and lean fine musculature of the Indian body.

Beautiful memorials are loved and admired by thousands who see them daily, yet who seldom think to ask the sculptor's name—one of numerous occupational hazards of this chancey profession. Among those by MacNeil you may have seen, and thrilled to, are the Fort Sumter memorial at Charleston, S. C.; the George Rogers Clark memorial statue at Vincennes, Ind.; busts of Rufus Choate, Roger Williams, James Monroe, Judge Parkman and J. Q. A. Ward, a fellow sculptor, in the Hall of Fame; General Washington on the Washington arch in New York city; the Orville Hitchcock Platt memorial in the state capitol at Hartford, Conn.; the Ezra Cornell memorial at Cornell university; the "Father of Seattle" at Seattle, Wash.; the bust of Chancellor Brown at New York university; the superb horse and rider commemorating the "Pony Express," in Central park at St. Louis, Mo.

#### Coin and Medals

His design was used for the 25-cent piece issued in 1916, and he has designed many medals for expositions and in art and educational fields. He is also constantly called to be a judge in competitions in which such medals, or important commis-

sions, are awarded.

He did important commemorative work for the Columbian, Chicago, Paris, Buffalo, St. Louis and Panama expositions, and here is just a partial list of honors he has won: the designers' medal, Chicago exposition; silver medal, Paris exposition; gold medal, Buffalo exposition; silver medal, Charleston exposition; commemorative medal, Louisiana Purchase exposition; gold medal, Panama exposition; medal of honor of the Architectural League of New York; the Saltus medal of 1923.

He has taught sculpture at Cornell and at the Chicago Art institute, and has helped many young sculptors on their way to success.

One gets to be a sculptor, says MacNeil, through knowing that that is the one thing one wants to do. Every young person feeling this urge faces far more obstacles than encouragement. You can't fool around or make mistakes where each work represents the investment of so much time, money and effort. A major piece takes months, sometimes years of work.

#### Historical Statue

MacNeil's best successes have been arrived at through a force-

ful blend of nature with imagination. Thus, commissioned to do a historical statue for Portland, Ore., he created one of massive height—two Indian figures, one somewhat dubious, the other waving a branch in an attitude of welcome. Christened "The Coming of the White Man", and placed on high ground in a park at the river bend around which the white man's boat actually came, the statue keeps vividly alive an historic moment of the city's past.

In carrying out a commission MacNeil first saturates himself in the history of the place or person concerned. History is just one of the many subjects a sculptor must learn besides his art. He must know the laws of physics, for working with huge heavy masses; geology, for knowledge of marble, granite and other stone; metallurgy, for casting in bronze and the newer alloys; mechanics, for translation of the original design into the finished work.

A stone cutter completes the piece, working with electrical equipment from the plaster model; but MacNeil oversees the job, whether it's done on the spot, as was the Supreme Court pediment, or in his studio at College Point, N. Y., for shipment.

Most of his heavy work is done at his College Point home, which is on Long Island, near the

homes of his two sons, both of whom inherit ability in the arts. They have a double right to it. MacNeil's first wife, Carol Brooks MacNeil, was also a sculptor of note, a pupil of MacMonnies.

The present Mrs. MacNeil, is also an artist—and, better still, an artist at keeping artists comfortable and happy.

In complete peace and happiness MacNeil, his friend Ormiston and his gentle wife keep up their work and play at the Pinebluff home—the world forgetting but not by the world forgot.

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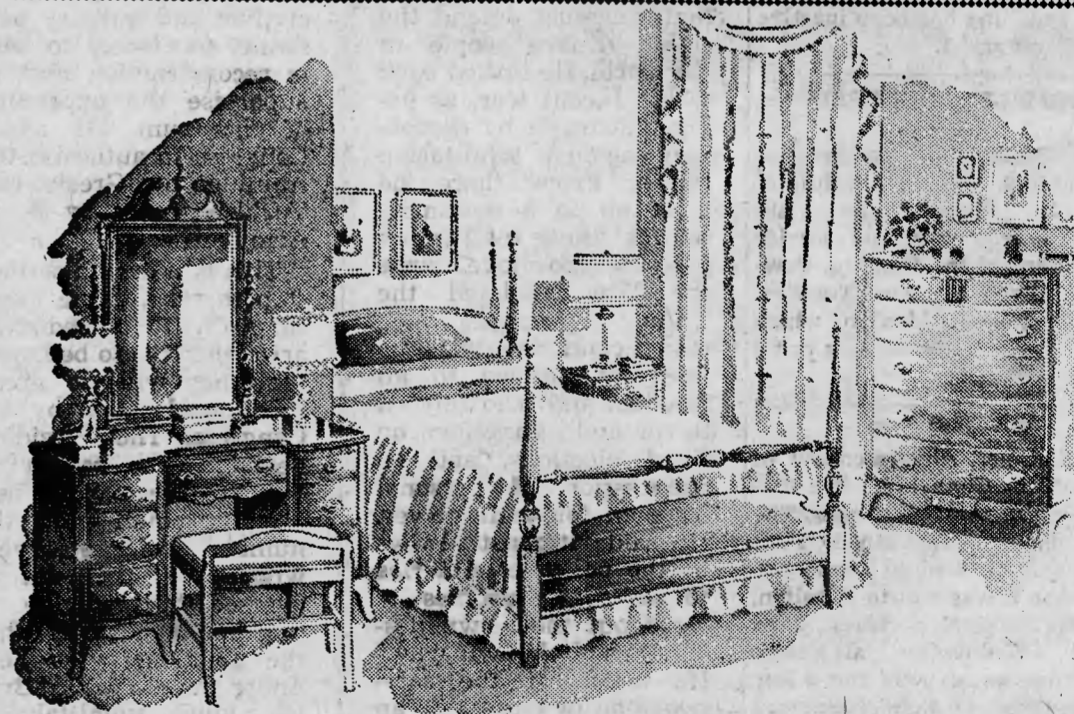
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