



SINCE ITS INSTALLATION IN 1934, THE GILDED CAST BRONZE statue of Prometheus in Rockefeller Center's lower plaza remains one of New York City's most iconic (and most photographed) monuments. Though few may recall the tale of the Greek Titan who fashioned humankind from clay and stole fire from Mount Olympus, fewer still know the story of the statue's creator Paul Manship, once the most sought-after sculptor in the country.

Rebecca Reynolds, president of the newly established nonprofit Manship Artists Residency and Studios (MARS), hopes to rekindle creative and public interest in Manship by transforming his Cape Ann summer estate into an artists' retreat. In 2016, MARS joined forces with the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy Andover to invite four New England photographers to participate in its inaugural visiting artist fellowship, culminating in an exhibition of new works.

Tucked down a winding, wooded road in the sleepy village of Lanesville, a ten-minute drive from Gloucester, the secluded Manship Estate abuts two quarry ponds and is spotted with pear trees and secret nooks. Designed in the 1940s by the architect Eric Gugler, who under FDR, also designed the White House Oval Office, it includes a historic

house and studio barn, as well as an imposing pergola (a former Rockport derrick), all taken from surrounding sites and reassembled and reconfigured to suit the family's needs. In summers, Manship hosted a rotating roster of friends, artists and clients here. An avid astronomer, he named the property Starfield for the open skies he loved to lie beneath.

Paul Howard Manship was born in 1885 in St. Paul, MN. A graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, he was awarded the prestigious Rome Prize in 1909, which took him to Europe. The continent fostered his love affair with classical mythology, and on returning to

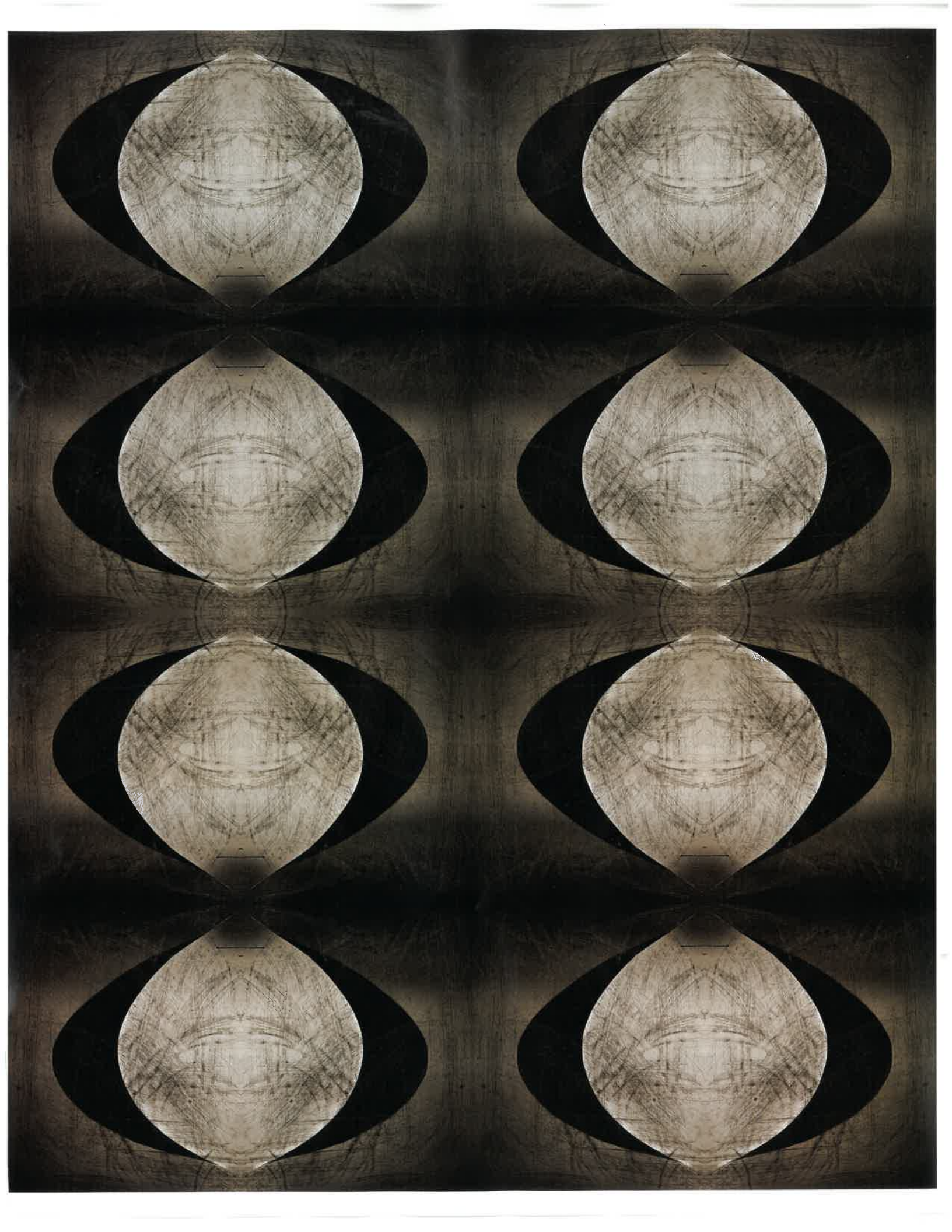
the U.S., he continued to draw heavily from its vast wealth of subjects. In his day, Manship enjoyed wide renown as a sculptor, earning high-visibility commissions, such as the 1915 redesign of the official seal of New York City (still in use), the gates of the Bronx and Central Park Zoos and his most familiar work, the Prometheus fountain at Rockefeller Center. Considered a forerunner of the American Art Deco movement, Manship's star began to wane by the time he settled in Cape Ann, notes Reynolds, a scholar of American sculpture, though he continued to receive commissions up until his death in 1966. (His 1965 Claude M. Fuess distinguished alumnae medal from Phillips Academy Andover is on display at the Addison.) The Smithsonian has a gallery devoted to his work. In 2004, they mounted a large retrospective—the last major exhibition of the sculptor's career to date.

Reynolds believes it's high time for a renewed look at Manship and his creative legacy, given his once exalted standing in the American art world and his creation of public works still in active use today. She hopes MARS's acquisition of Starfield will help pave the way for future scholarship, as well as stimulate new creative talent.

Starfield's Ghosts

Resurrecting Paul Manship's Home and Legacy

CERYS WILSON





Previous Spread: Paul Manship working on figure of *Diana*, to his right is the Morgan Memorial tablet now in the Metropolitan Museum, 1920, gelatin silver print. From the Manship Family Archives. Courtesy of the Estate of Margaret Cassidy Manship. Photo by Nickolas Muray. Abelardo Morell, *Photogram #2*, from *Vertical Constructions*, 2018, archival pigment print, 60 x 45". © Abelardo Morell. Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery.

Above, left: S. Billie Mandle, *Shadow 2*, 2017–18, archival pigment print, 20 x 24". © S. Billie Mandle. Courtesy of the artist.

Above, right: Barbara Bosworth, *Quarry #2*, 2018, archival pigment print, 40 x 50". © Barbara Bosworth. Courtesy of the artist.

Opposite: Justin Kimball, *Hands*, 2018, archival inkjet print, 23 x 30¹/₈". © Justin Kimball. Courtesy of the artist.

On a visit there this past fall, I had trouble finding the spot, asking three different Lanesville residents for directions—none of whom knew of Manship or his house. (Eventually, the postmaster directed me.) When I finally arrived, Reynolds and I huddled in the frigid kitchen, blowing on our hands to stay warm, while a team of electricians worked upstairs, trying to bring heat to the house before winter set in. No one has yet stayed in the house, and the four inaugural artists—Abelardo Morell, Barbara Bosworth, Justin Kimball and S. Billie Mandle—who spent a full calendar year coming and going from the property were billed as visiting fellows, rather than residents.

Cape Ann is rich in creative output, and at the heart of MARS lies the potential for collaboration between the external artist community and the fledging residency. (This past summer, the estate hosted performances by a local, contemporary dance troupe.) Several Lanesville artists have offered use of their studios while the barn is under construction. Reynolds imagines that, in time, local artists might staff the estate—similar, she says, to the Vermont Studio Center's Staff-Artist Program,

where artists receive free room and board as Resident Assistants (RAs). Over the next few years, MARS will operate as a pilot program until it finds its legs, with incoming residents spending one-to-six weeks on site (with space for up to five at one time). The goal is to foster an international, interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars year-round, who will recapture the creative spirit of Starfield.

Manship's elegant, dynamic style holds court in the Addison exhibition, *From Starfield to MARS: Paul Manship and his Artistic Legacy*, with the central gallery given over to statues, sketches and mockups of his grand mythological figures. Orbiting these works are four satellite rooms wherein each of the inaugural MARS fellows pays tribute to the master and his Cape Ann residence.

Curator of Photography and Senior Curator of American Art Allison Kemmerer selected the artists based on their strong connection to New England and their previous engagement with topics of place and memory. Over the course of a year, the four were given unlimited access to the property, their only mandate being to respond to it and its past inhabitants in some way. (The last residents



were Manship's son, John, a painter, and John's wife, Margaret, a sculptor, who died in 2000 and 2012, respectively.)

The results capture the sense of personal history and slow decay one encounters at modern-day Starfield, with its shrouded sculptures, empty pedestals and imprints on empty walls where frames once hung. To varying degrees, these images (and thus their authors) also stand detached from Manship the creator. This is fine, of course: MARS was founded in the name of creation, not adoration. But the distance, expressed in Bosworth's long-exposure shooting stars (*Star field #1-12*) and in Mandle's underexposed images of John's landscape paintings begs the question: How relevant is Manship to contemporary artists? With due respect, the answer appears written on the walls.

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Visual connections between the galleries at times proves more interesting than the individual content within—connections made still more compelling by the knowledge that the fellows didn't cross paths during their time at Starfield, nor did they know of each other's focus. Bosworth's velvety nightscapes of the quarries, where sky, land and water bleed into

one, in turn flow into Mandle's inky renderings of John's canvases. And while light, in all its earthly majesty, claims Bosworth's attention, Mandle seeks its opposite, photographing John's paintings (which are alive with color) in the dark closets and studio attic where she found them. Through these underexposed images, Mandle infers a tension between father



and son—the younger Manship overshadowed by the elder (the inference, she says, is her own)—and in so doing achieves a conceptual complexity otherwise lacking in the exhibition. (Inspired by Cape Ann’s storied artist community, Bosworth also photographed details of paintings from the Addison’s permanent collection, mounted as a series of anonymous cloud studies. That both Bosworth and Mandle chose to co-opt other artists’ works, and not Manship’s, makes for an intriguing aside.)

Kimball’s photographs are more explicit: documents of a house gone to ruin, a world of dust sheets, plaster casts and mold. In his travels around the property, he admits to staging certain shots, moving an object here or there, mostly in the pursuit of natural light. He swears, however, that he found the dust sheet draped over the mannequin—a setup so perfectly haunting, one wonders if his colleagues (or the electrician) did it as a joke.

Morell strays furthest from the house, drawing on the creative influences and techniques of Manship’s day to create intricate,

mandala-esque cliché verge prints (an antique process wherein glass plates are painted with ink to create handmade negatives). “My tribute to him was to become him,” says Morell, who, immersed himself in the styles of Art Deco, Art Nouveau, the Arts and Craft movement, Bauhaus and Navajo weaving, among others. (Initially he had planned to project and photograph shadows of Manship’s objects against the exterior barn wall, recalling his previous work with camera obscura.) Viewed in relation to the other galleries, Morell’s contribution stands apart, both in content and vitality. Despite their adherence to the past, the hypnotic energy of the prints feels wholly fresh and new.

There’s a sense in the Addison exhibition that Mandle, Kimball and Bosworth have created an exquisite corpse of Starfield, one that begins in the heavens and ends in the ground. Morell instead draws his own world, spinning off into a distant orbit. Whatever one deduces from these four interpretations of Manship’s legacy, it can be said with certainty that the ghosts of Starfield are very much alive for all

Installation view, Courtesy Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA.

involved in its resurrection. The next two years mark an exciting time for MARS as it welcomes its first official resident artists. Success will stem from a desire to breathe new life into the property and break new ground. ■

Cerys Wilson is a regular contributor to Art New England.

Addison Gallery of American Art
 Andover, MA
addison.andover.edu
 Through January 20, 2019
 Manship Artists Residency + Studio
 Gloucester, MA
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