

CONNER • ROSENKRANZ

19th & 20th Century American Sculpture

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George Copeland Ault (1891-1948)

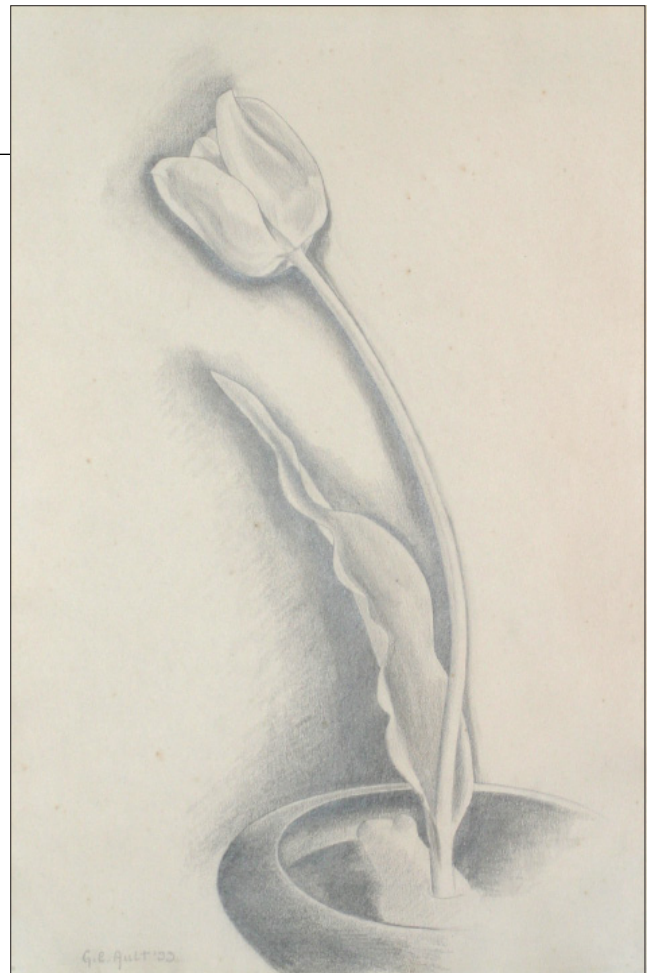
It was through his father's business that George Ault first became interested in art. An amateur artist, Ault senior started a company that exported American inks and painting techniques to England and eventually throughout Europe, and in this fashion young Ault had an early exposure to materials and craft.

Ault's earliest studies were in London at St John's Wood Art School and then at the Slade School, where he found his most influential teachers, Henry Tonks and Wilson Steer, the latter an impressionist painter.

In 1911, when Ault was twenty years old, his family returned his native New York. There he began painting in a spare, modernist style, a decision that alienated his conservative father. In 1920 Ault participated in a show organized by the Society of Independent Artists, a group, whose founders included Marcel Duchamp and Joseph Stella, organized in reaction to the traditional constraints of a juried exhibition. Annual exhibitions were open to anyone who wished to display their work.

The ensuing years were Ault's most productive. He had his first one-person show in 1923 at the Bourgeois Gallery, and subsequently at J.B. Neumann's New Art Circle in 1927, the Downtown Gallery in 1927 and 1928, and at Grand Central Art Galleries in 1930. Arts patron Hamilton Easter Field included Ault's work in the annual Salons of America exhibitions between 1921 and 1934, and from 1922 to 1934 his work was shown in eight Annual Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

The masterful drawing, *Tulip*, which was displayed in the 1933 Salons of America exhibition, typifies the distinctive style Ault developed during the 1920s: a highly refined precisionist rigor informed and enlivened by naturalistic lyricism. In this simple drawing, Ault's line perfectly



Tulip, 1933, graphite, 15 x 10 inches, Conner • Rosenkranz

describes the graceful simplicity of the flower's form, eliminating all but the essential detail while retaining the aura of a living object.

Selected References:

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Stavitsky, Gail et al. *Precisionism in America 1915-1941: Reordering Reality*. New York: Harry N. Abrams and Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey, 1994: 16-18, 22, 24, 27-28, 33-34, 37, 82, 84, 103, 128, 147.