

HOSTLER BURROWS



HENRY HEERUP (Danish, 1907-1993)
Octopus, Denmark, ca. 1945
granite
14" H x 8" W x 9.5" D
signed

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Henry Heerup **Danish, 1907 - 1993**

Henry Heerup was a Danish sculptor and painter from Copenhagen who studied under Axel Jørgensen, Einar Neilsen, and Einar Utzon-Frank at the Royal Danish Academy of Art. Heerup had an awkward childhood, disliking school and not fitting in until discovering the arts. Attending the Royal Danish Academy of Art from 1927 - 1932, he developed his own personal style, recognizable throughout his body of work. Heerup worked with a few different groups of artists, including Corner, Høst, and COBRA, among others.

Heerup valued the idea of recycling within his work, often reusing stone, paper, and canvas to create new works, even integrating garbage. Thorns, pots, old signs, and carpets were all worked into his paintings. Heerup embraced the use of symbols, focusing on life in its entirety – the joy, wonder, love, sorrow, and pain life contains were his focal points. He depicted a simple and present view of life, focusing on the happiness of family, nature, and love, but with loneliness, fear, and death on the horizon.

For his sculptures, Heerup used granite, calling it the hard-boiled egg of nature, emphasizing that there was always something hidden inside of the hard rock. He said, “The thing is that you get something forgiving from the stone, and then you pursue the forms... Of a lumpy rock you do not make a dancer, but it may be a bear.” His sculptures reflect his interest in popular art as well as the ornamentation of the Vikings, reflecting his reverence for the Jellingstenene (the Jelling Stones).

He was appointed a Knight of the Order of the Dannebrog in 1968. He received the Eckersberg Medal and the Thorvaldsen Medal, as well as Storm, P. Grant, and NL Stevns Grants. Heerup had exhibitions in Venice, Paris, New York, Amsterdam, and throughout Scandinavia. His works are represented in numerous Scandinavian museums, as well as the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Department of Fine Arts at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh.