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| **Brecheret, Victor (b. 15 December 1894, Farnese, Italy – d. 17 December 1955, São Paulo, Brazil)** |
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| Victor Brecheret was a modernist sculptor whose unique style incorporated the graceful design of Art Nouveau and Art Decoand the purity of the School of Paris. Working in São Paulo, one of the centres of the avant-garde during the earliest manifestations of modernism in Brazil, Brecheret participated in the *Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922* [Week of Modern Art] – an arts festival organised by a group of modernists for the centennial celebration of Brazilian independence – which took place in the Teatro Municipal de São Paulo between February 3 and 17, 1922. Brecheret became an important part of this intellectual group, which included the painters Anita Malfatti and Emiliano Di Cavalcanti; the poet, Menotti del Picchia; and the writers, Mario de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade. Brecheret was inspired to simplify his sculptural forms while visiting the Parisian ateliers of two noted sculptors: the Romanian, Constantin Brancusi, and the Frenchman, Aristide Maillol. As a modernist working on public monuments – such as the *Monumento às Bandeiras* [*Monument to the Pioneers*], in Ibirapuera Park, São Paulo, 1936-1956 – Brecheret was able to unite his national tendencies with his international inclinations. In working with ideas from both Brazil and Europe, Brecheret assimilates national subjects with international styles to create works that are decidedly his own. Furthermore, in choosing unusual poses or unconventional designs, he gives traditional themes a unique character.  Born Vittorio Breheret in Italy, Brecheret had a twin sister Adalgisa (while his birth certificate cites the birthplace as São Paulo, his son Victor Brecheret Filho has verified that his father was born in Italy). When his mother died in 1900 and his father was unable to raise the two children, an aunt in São Paulo brought the twins to Brazil in 1904 when Victor was ten years old. Recognising his talent, in 1913 his aunt and uncle paid for Brecheret to travel to Naples, Italy. Before long, he was in Rome; he then returned to Brazil in 1919. Brecheret received a government scholarship in 1921 to study in Paris where, in 1923, he was in contact with Brancusi.  Two of Brecheret’s early religious sculptures made in the 1920s, *Pietá* and *Ascensão* [*Ascension*], show a unique interpretation of specific moments after Christ’s death. During this period, Brecheret was inspired by art nouveau works, in particular those of the Croatian sculptor, Ivan Meštrovic, who exhibited with the Secession Group in Vienna. Although the pietágenerally depicts the sorrowful Virgin seated and holding the dead body of Christ in her lap, Brecheret’s *Pietá* is made more emotional and dramatic by having the Virgin in an untraditional vertical pose; she is standing and tightly grasping the limp body of her son after he was taken down from the cross. The veil over her head reveals her face turned sadly towards his. In the *Ascension,* theemphasis is on the spirit-like body of Christ slipping upward and away from the solid and grounded form of the Virgin Mary seated below. The abstraction and refinement of form in these pieces indicate an individual twist on the contemporary works of Brancusi. The traditional classical or academic figure and pose has been simplified; Brecheret has reduced the forms to their basics by elongating and distorting the bodies.  File: Brecheret\_Ascencao\_1924.jpg  Figure 1: Brecheret, *Ascencão* (ca. 1924). *Ascensão* (*Ascension*), from Pellegrini, A Escultura Religiose de Brecheret, 35.  A change in style is apparent in Brecheret’s works of the 1930s. While sculptures such as *O Beijo* [*The Kiss*](1933) still seems to owe something to Brancusi, they are more sensual and elegant and reflect the emerging forms of Art Deco. The embrace of Brecheret’s couple could be compared with *The Kiss* (ca.1907-1908) by the Austrian painterGustav Klimt. In the Viennese Art Nouveau style, Klimt’s *The Kiss* is marked by an organic fluidity, with sinuous curves and flowery or vine-like decoration. In contrast, in Brecheret’s *The Kiss*, the two figures almost meld together and the more angular, streamlined, and sleek forms of Art Deco are introduced.  File: Brecheret\_Kiss\_1933.jpg  Figure 2: Brecheret, *The Kiss* (1933). http://www.nemirovsky.org.br/v2/index.php/victor-brecheret-2?start=1  Brecheret’s well-known public sculpture, *Monument to the Pioneers,* was originally commissioned by the state government in 1920 but was delayed for numerous years. Finally, in 1936, the government approved and signed a contract. The work is a monumental homage to pioneer São Paulo explorers and expeditions who led the way into the backlands. It depicts a dramatic grouping of thirty-seven figures pushing forward in a motion that shows strength and perseverance. List of Selected Works: *Tocadora de Guitarra* [*Guitar Player*](1923). Bronze, 75 x 21 x 16cm.  *Ascencão* [*Ascension*] (ca.1924). Marble, 83 x 25cm.  *Pietà* (ca. 1926-1927). Granite and marble versions.  *O Beijo* [*The Kiss*](1933). Bronze, 33cm.  *Monumento às Bandeiras* [*Monument to the Pioneers*] (1936-1956). Ibirapuera Park, São Paulo. 50x15x6m. |
| Further reading:  (Alvarado)  (Brecheret Filho)  (Fundação (Foundation) Victor Brecheret)  (Lopez)  (Pellegrini, A Escultura Religiosa/Religious Sculpture de Brecheret)  (Pellegrini, Brecheret - 60 anos de notícia ) |