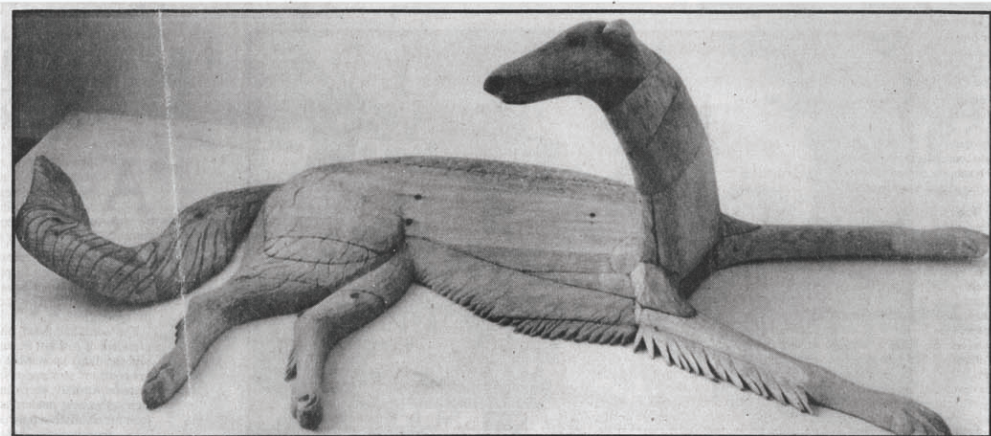


# ALEXANDRE

THE NEW YORK OBSERVER May 16, 1988

## Arnold's Graceful, Distinctive Vision



"Monte I," by Anne Arnold, on exhibit at the Fischbach Gallery.

Bob Brooks

By Hilton Kramer

In the very small Anne Arnold exhibition at the Fischbach Gallery, 24 West 57th Street (through May 21), there are only four sculptures—wood carvings of domestic animals, two of cats and two of an elegant Russian wolfhound named Monte—and none is immense in size. Yet upon entering the room that houses these four carvings we know straightaway that we are in the presence of the real thing—a sculptor of authentic gifts whose skill and imagination are made manifest in every nuance of the work on view.

The masterpiece here is "Monte I," an incredible feat of carving and joinery that encompasses much that is traditional in animal sculpture and much that is distinctive to Ms. Arnold's own sculptural vision. In this work the subject is shown in an attitude of repose, its legs, torso and tail extended along the floor in a stunning configuration of exquisite forms. From the forward end of the torso, where it joins the front legs, the wolfhound's superb, elongated neck

and muzzle rise in a strong, slender mass that traces a gesture as perfect as any we might expect to see in a great ballet dancer. The whole work is a triumph of the sculptor's art. There isn't a false note or a superfluous detail anywhere to be seen.

Anne Arnold's sculpture has never fitted into any of the prevailing modes of contemporary art. In some respects it has the kind of innocence and affection we associate with certain styles of folk art, yet it is no more "naive" than the primitivist art produced by Picasso. It is in fact governed by a highly developed and highly knowledgeable sense of sculptural form and in its own way it is as modern as it is traditional. It is because the art public no longer has a ready command of the tradition this sculpture comes out of that the work sometimes seems almost too easy and too modest to be taken seriously. But in this matter, as in so many others, the art public still has much to learn.

291 Grand Street, New York, New York 10002

25 East 73rd Street, 2nd Floor, New York, New York 10021 212.755.2828 alexandregallery.com

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