

BOWMAN SCULPTURE

ATTILIO PICCIRILLI (American, 1866-1945)

Attilio Piccirilli was born in Massa Carrara, near Pisa, Italy, in 1866. He was born into a family of sculptors; his father was the sculptor Guisepppe Piccirilli and his five brothers all became successful sculptors. Attilio demonstrated striking artistic talent at a young age. At the age of 14, he was sent to study at the Accademia di San Luca, in Rome. He completed his training in 1885 and joined his father and brothers in the family business. In 1888, he emigrated to the United States of America and settled in New York City. There he worked with his father and brothers at the successful Piccirilli Studios, which were first based in Manhattan and later at larger premises in the Bronx.

The Piccirillis collaborated with numerous sculptors, such as Daniel Chester French, carving marble versions of their preliminary models. They carved some of the most iconic sculptures, memorials and architectural decorations in north-east America. Their work can be found throughout the United States of America, including the seated figure of Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial and *The Angel of Death and the Sculptor* for the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Their studios were also one of the first importers of expensive marbles, such as Carrara, from Italy to the United States of America.

Piccirilli went on to distinguish himself as a renowned sculptor in his own right. His style emerged to be distinct from the prevailing artistic taste of the time of eclecticism, frills and artificiality. He held memberships at the National Academy of Design, the National Sculpture Society and the Architectural League. His work garnered numerous awards, including a gold medal at the Panama-Pacific Exhibition, held in San Francisco in 1915. His work can be found today in private and public collections, among which are the Metropolitan Museum of Arts in New York City and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

His biographer, Joseph Vincent Lombardo, writes that '*Piccirilli's art stands out boldly for its discipline, simplicity and dignity[...]*His sculpture was and is simply tailored, free from adventurous detail and superficiality...*[it] is distinctly personal and highly selective.*' (Lombardo, 1944, p. 2).