

THE COMPETITOR BY R. TAIT MCKENZIE (1867-1938)

Dimensions: H: 20.5 in / 52 cm | W: 16 in / 41 cm | D: 9.5 in / 26 cm

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The Competitor
By R. Tait McKenzie (1867-1938)

In his sculptures, the Canadian-born McKenzie, a practising physician and the director of the Department of Physical Education at Philadelphia's University of Pennsylvania, portrayed athletes in varying states of motion and rest. A sense of impending action is present in "The Competitor," in which a lithe runner kneels to lace his shoe in a solitary moment before a race. Signed '06 / R·Tait McKenzie' and bearing the foundry mark 'Roman Bronze Works N.Y.'
American, circa 1906

An identical bronze, from the same cast, is on view at the Metropolitan Museum of New York (09.56.1), purchased directly from the artist. Another was acquired by the National Gallery of Canada in 1911.

University of Pennsylvania athlete Maurice Husik posed for this sculpture during the summer of

1906.

Robert Tait McKenzie (1867-1938)

Canadian sculptor and medical practitioner, born in Almonte, Ontario, of Scottish parents. Graduating with an MD from McGill University, Montreal, in 1892, he began his medical career at Montreal General Hospital, later serving as a ship's surgeon before becoming House Physician to the Governor-General of Canada in 1897. His work as a lecturer in anatomy and Medical Director in Physical Training at McGill University led him to the subject of 'artistic anatomy', and in 1902 he began to contribute sculptures, 'chiefly athletic in character', to the Royal Academy and the Paris Salon. Thereafter, his development as an artist and his work as a Professor of Physical Education at the University of Pennsylvania were closely intertwined, and in 1912 he was awarded the King of Sweden's Medal for his sculptures at the Olympic Games in Stockholm.