

**FREDERICK WILLIAM MACMONNIES** (1863-1937),

b. Brooklyn Heights, Brooklyn, NY

### EDUCATION/INFLUENCES

- studio assistant to Augustus Saint-Gaudens at age 16 (there for 5 years). Also studied at National Academy of Design and Art Students League in NY. 1884-studied sculpture at Ecole des Beaux-Arts.
- 1888-opened a studio in Paris. Submitted regularly to Paris Salon. Occasionally returned to America but lived most of his life as an expatriate in France.

### BIG IDEAS/THEMES

- Known for lithe bronze figures. Worked in the academic style of the time with interest in naturalism of figure. Worked mostly on commission. Was successful in both France and US. Many of his American works were met with mixed feelings and many were removed to not so public locations because of the public outcries of nudity.
- Received commissions through contacts made at Saint-Gaudens studio with Stanford White and Charles F. McKim, both prominent architects.
- Copies of this sculpture scattered around in US museums as MacMonnies was one of the earliest American sculptors to supplement his fees by selling reduced-size reproductions to the public.



### KIA Work-*Nathan Hale*, 1890, bronze with brown patina

- This bronze is a cast of the model for the life-size bronze figure of Nathan Hale that was commissioned by the Sons of the Revolution of the State of New York for City Hall Park (near the site where Hale was supposedly hanged). One of MacMonnies' best known sculptures.
- MacMonnies worked on this commission in his Paris studio in 1890. By 1891, the Hale portrait had been cast in plaster and was exhibited at the Salon. Upon being cast in bronze, the life-size version was shipped from Paris to New York where it was unveiled on Nov. 25, 1893 on the centennial anniversary of the evacuation of British troops from New York city. The life-size version stands opposite New York's City Hall.
- The Hale sculpture has been lauded as one of the "finest American Beaux-Arts statues".
- Inscribed F. MacMonnies and dated 1890, stamped E. Gruet Jeune Fondateur 44 bis Avenue de Chatillon Paris on base; also inscribed "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country" on front of base.

### American History-Who was Nathan Hale?

Nathan Hale (1755-1776), born in Coventry, Connecticut to Puritan parents who believed in religious devotion, a strong work ethic and education. He graduated from Yale at the age of 18 and became a teacher. Known for his good looks (just under 6 ft tall with fair skin and hair and light blue eyes), his kindness, intelligence, athleticism, and religious faith, Hale died a traitor's death at the age 21. He was captured by the British, given no trial and hanged by the British as a spy for the Colonial forces. Supposedly before he died, he uttered some version of the following quote, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." This mild mannered teacher had become a Captain in the 19th Connecticut Regiment and had undertaken the unseemly role of spy at the request of General Washington. Washington needed to know the site of the upcoming British invasion of Manhattan island in September 1776. Hale was to go behind enemy lines to learn this information. The invasion came while Hale was still behind the lines and he was captured as he prepared to rendezvous with American forces. So it was not Hale's actions but his words that reminded Americans that this country was still worth dying for and Hale was eventually hailed as a hero. His body was left hanging for several days near the site of his execution and later was buried in an unmarked grave.