

Journaling by Michele Newman
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So, what will it be today? Possible themes to explore are certainly not lacking in this overbrimming consciousness of mine... There may even be time for more than one subject of interest.



OK, I will start with some of my remembrances along the life of the Artist's Wife. The Paris episode after leaving Florence around September 1953. Shipping three crates of marble: One containing The Pugno, the other one The Torso, and the third the lost statue, The Oppresso, together with the product of his first afternoon at the Carrara School of Marble: a study of his hand carved within one of the spare feet used to train the students. Of course since there was barely enough money to eat, and since we were "gringos" without a shred of suspiciousness, it did not even occur to us that the said crates should be seriously insured. I to this day remember it was the Danzas Co. who was use for the shipment.. Of course all was in storage. One of those crates was opened in Paris when David found a worthy recipient for the Pugno. We were in contact with the very well-known philosopher Henri Lefebvre after having been backstage to express our appreciation of a lecture he delivered – I still remember the subject," le typique", probably in art and literature. He became interested in David's ideas and we spent quite a few evenings with him, and some other artists. I still remember one of those occasions when, at The Closerie des Lilas, in Montparnasse we met Ernest Pignon, Picasso's protégé, Hans Erni and a Turkish artist named Abi Din. The discussions revolved sometimes upon the very divergent ideas over the content of art... The old battle between Art for Art's sake and Art that preaches...David, who already was capable of great generosity with his art for those he respected offered The Pugno to Henri.

This must have been the time where, discontented with the Asnières quarters where we rented from a couple, friends of someone my godmother knew, a very stifling and narrow atmosphere, we had moved to a room in a hotel rue Lamarck. I'd go to the butcher for beef broth, and balance big vegetable soups upon a small spirit stove.. Talking about exiguous acrobatics!. I also will never forget the loud exclamations of our neighbors' trysts and the squeeking bedsprings. A far cry from the aristocratic environment Florence always seemed to provide. I got a job with one of the famous Fasquelle people typing scenarios... and, as you know, a Sorbonne degree does not prepare you for that. I remember vividly meeting a man who would never have to earn a living because his grandfather had written a famous song called "Ma Combine".A very trivial song. That was mindboggling to me. I had to leave David at the hotel, go down to the 6eme, make the fire and type away. Mr. F. was the image of the successful "homme d'affaires", heavy dark blue overcoat and "chapeau a bords roubles".Of course I was not comfortable doing something I was not trained to, but I must say there were some colourful characters there.

I think that is when David started to plan the next period. Drawing was the obsession, and I am sure he went to study from the museums before meeting me for a container of French fries, a walk and a coffee. At that moment, money became a serious problem. Something had to give. I got a better job, still not what I needed, but it came with the possibility of renting a better place. We still thought we could try to survive. However, I think perhaps in his mind the fear of injuring our future health was a factor in his decision to go back to America where he had a craft at which he could make a living. I realize now that there must have been a family man in the making, although he was so important to me that I was always willing to mould my life around his vocation.. or should I call it a calling?