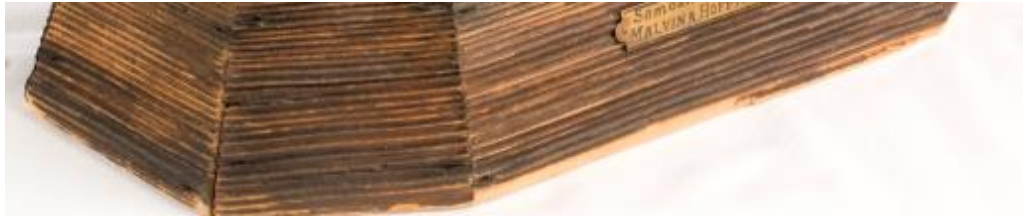


# Basic Detail Report



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## **Title: Samoan Warrior (Polynesian)**

Date: 1932

Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@3e4f4

Medium: Sculpture, bronze and polychrome patina

Description: In 1915 the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago formulated "plans for a hall to present to the public the biological problems of mankind."<sup>(2)</sup> While various financial and logistical complications delayed its completion, a bequest from Chauncey Keep, former member of the museum's board of trustees who died in 1929, allowed the museum to proceed with the project. With additional funds provided by Marshall Field, Stanley Field, and Mrs. Charles H. Schweppe, the museum commissioned 104 portraits, busts, heads, and figures from Malvina Hoffman. Hoffman was given the commission because of the critical and popular success of a series of wooden and stone heads of ethnic types she had produced during and after a trip to Africa in 1926.<sup>(3)</sup> She was now asked by the Field Museum to "proceed to those lands where native races are at their purest, and there register in clay and finish in bronze the living lineaments of selected types."<sup>(4)</sup> She signed the contract for the project on February 18, 1930, and, with her husband, Samuel B. Grimson, serving as photographer and aide, spent most of 1931-32 traveling throughout the South Pacific, Japan, China, India, Malaysia, Australia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas.<sup>(5)</sup> The results of her efforts were unveiled in 1933 at the Field Museum's Hall of Man (officially called Chauncey Keep Memorial Hall), where they were seen by a large audience during the World's Columbian Exposition.<sup>(6)</sup> Casts of the figures were also exhibited in Paris at the Musée d'Ethnographie, Palais du Trocadéro, between July and November 1933, and in New York at the Grand Central Art Galleries in January and February 1934, after which they traveled around the United States for more than two years.<sup>(7)</sup> In 1936 Hoffman published her book "Heads and Tales", in which she told the story of the commission and its outcome. "Samoan Warrior" is one of twenty-seven busts Hoffman produced for the Field Museum, and, like most of those in the group, it is one-half life size. The subject is shown holding a typical Samoan war knife. The installation of Hoffman's works in the Field Museum's Hall of Man was dismantled in 1966 and the sculptures scattered throughout the complex. DBD Bibliography: Janis Conner, "Malvina Hoffman" (1881-1966), exhib. cat. (New York: FAR Gallery, 1980); Janis C. Conner, "A Dancer in Relief: Works by Malvina Hoffman", exhib. cat. (Yonkers, N.Y.: Hudson River Museum, 1984; May Brawley Hill, "The Woman Sculptor: Malvina Hoffman and Her

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Contemporaries", exhib. cat. (New York: Berry-Hill Galleries, 1984); Linda Nochlin, "Malvina Hoffman: A Life in Sculpture," "Arts Magazine" 59 (November 1984): 106-10; Janis Conner and Joel Rosenkranz, "Rediscoveries in American Sculpture: Studio Works, 1893-1939" (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), pp. 53-62. Samoan Warrior ("Samoan Man"; "Samoan", "Polynesia"; "Man from Samoa", "Polynesia, South Sea Islands"), 1932 Bronze, 16 1/4 x 12 1/2 x 7 in. (41.3 x 31.8 x 17.8 cm) Inscribed (verso, center): © M. HOFFMAN 1932; inscribed (verso, lower right): "Alexis Rudier./ Fondeur Paris". Charles F. Smith Fund (1950.1)  
Dimensions: 13 1/2 x 10 1/2 x 8 in. (34.3 x 26.7 x 20.3 cm)