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Caryl Picker's sculptures dance at Tiffany & Co

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The first impression is of their dramatic sense of movement, on viewing the cast bronze dance figures by noted artist Caryl Picker in the five Tiffany windows at 57 Street and Fifth Avenue, until March 5, courtesy of the Heidi Neuhoff Gallery, 999 Madison Avenue, where the work can be seen after that date. With this dramatic sense, Picker underscores her understanding of the quality of the dance and of the nature of the human body. The dance is nothing if not theater, and she is able to translate these two art forms into a third, sculpture.

Much of her success is due to her poise or sense of equilibrium and to her intense rhythm of line, yet all of this is made most effective by her choice of subjects, their thin, greatly elongated torsos and limbs. Only the famous modern sculptor, Giacometti, formed such thin figures, but Picker uses them to express movement, while the great Italian created stillness.

Picker finds subjects long and thin beyond belief, and her works have the same transcending impact. The third element of her technique is to

employ rough texture and a dark green or brown patina to slow down the already rapid movement of the dance, thus allowing the viewer's eye to keep pace with the sculpture.

In "The Reverie," reproduced on another page of this issue, Picker captures a couple at a height in their dance, arms and legs flowing into one another so that the two become as one, with the music and the dance. They are in a lithe union of power. Their gestures are normal, but the effect is great because of the illusion of curved form of their thin limbs and the positions in which they are arranged.

Each work, indeed, has a different effect and seems to represent a different kind of dance. In "La Valse," reproduced here, the single woman dancer stretches her torso back to the utmost point, the graceful rhythms of dress, body, and arms without end. Her long robe arches, whipping up high from the sudden arrest in the dance.

The dance, indeed, is a succession of movements and suspense, just as life itself, and Caryl Picker discovers that truth in bronze permanence as she pursues her art to an ultimate clarity.



Caryl Picker, "La Valse," cast bronze with patina, one in a set of six, Tiffany windows, courtesy Heidi Neuhoff Gallery