

# XAVIER EECKHOUT



**Florentin brigaud (1886 - 1958)**

**Cormorant**

Bronze

Signed and numbered 1/7

Stamped by the foundry Bisceglia

Model created in 1948

## **Exhibitions**

Gien, 1999, Animaux, la sculpture animalière dans les collections du Musée international de la chasse, pp. 88-89, n° 31, repr.

## **Artist description:**

Florentin Brigaud was an engineer who devoted himself to sculpture relatively late, namely at the age of 49. His first work dates 1935 and his creation extends only on 23 years. Two years after his death in 1960, the Musée de la Monnaie in Paris dedicated a retrospective to him. The collection of his friend Edmond Roudnitska contains a copy of each of the models created by Brigaud; they reflect both the consistency and the diversity of his sculpted work.

Fascinated by the Exposition Coloniale of 1931, Brigaud decided to go regularly to the menagerie of the Jardin des Plantes, where, in 1933 he met the sculptor Mateo Hernandez (1885-1949), who encouraged him to practice his art. Thus he began an intense production of art works. As Hernandez, Brigaud sought to master all stages of the creation of his models, he reworked his plasters, engraved and applied patina to his own bronzes.

During World War I, as an engineer, he was led to Russia and the French army charged him with a mission of technical assistance to the Russian government, then an ally. It is in this country that Brigaud met his wife. During his years in Russia, he never stopped drawing. This practice of the graphic study of the model is essential for understanding the Brigaud creative approach, who proceeded in the manner of an engineer by successive careful quasi-scientific studies of the subject. He was interested in both the anatomy and behaviour of the animals. He was a contemporary of Pompon and he admired his work but intended to follow a different path that he felt was less intuitive and more oriented towards abstraction of lines.

In a 1950 letter, Brigaud wrote: "I forbid myself to portray the animal that I chose, but instead [...] I try to represent as much as possible the ideal animal as I imagine it in a noble attitude." 1

In 1952, Brigaud met Henri de Linares, painter and founder of the Musée International de la Chasse de Gien; their friendship is the basis of the donation of a significant part of his work in 1962 by the widow of the sculptor.

The work of Brigaud was appreciated by contemporary critics from his first solo exhibition in 1947: "The first time we were given the opportunity to see sculptures of Brigaud, the authority of their style and mastery of execution astonished us. [...] We had the distinct sensation of finding ourselves before the works of a high-class artist of great craftsmanship." 2

1 Yves Malécot, « Florentin Brigaud, sculpteur et médailleur », in Médailles, mars 1960

2 Maximilien Gauthier, « Florentin Brigaud », Mobilier et Décoration, n° 6, 1950