

XAVIER EECKHOUT



François POMPON (Saulieu 1855 - Paris 1933)

Foulque

Bronze

Signed "Pompon" and numbered 3

Stamped by the foundry C. Valsuani, on the base

Realised in 1925, during the artist's lifetime

Edition to 6, numbered 1 to 5. The 6th without number,

acquired by the French State in December 1925, assigned currently to the Musée d'Orsay, inv. N. RF 4051.

History :

Plaster model exhibited in 1924 in Paris, Jean Charpentier Gallery, at the Salon des Artistes Animaliers, under the title “ Nouvelle poule d'eau ”. Our model is the accomplishment of a long period of creation by the sculptor. Pompon created three models of moorhens in 1911, 1913 and 1924. Our model from 1924, is the most accomplished, the most modern : at once perfectly smooth yet with sensitive, controlled movement, from the grabbing and lifting of the leg to the twisting of the neck. “Movement is life”, said Pompon.

Literature

C. Chevillot, L. Colas, A. Pinget, *François Pompon 1855-1933*, Gallimard / Electa – RMN ed., Paris, 1994, p. 203, n. 97B, repr.

Artist description:

Ten years before his death, Pompon created two of his most emblematic artworks, the White Bear in 1922 and the Black Panther in 1925. Made of stone, its uniqueness rises it to the echelon of a quality museum piece.

Its prestigious provenance gives its exceptional character. Bought by the collector Jacques André in 1928 at the Salon des Tuileries from François Pompon himself, it has been kept in the family until now.

Painted by Bernard Boutet de Monvel, patron of Gustave Miklos, Jacques André (1882-1970) was passionate by the art of his time, he was not very well known by the public but he was very important at that time.

There is a lot of literature on this artwork, which Pompon mentions in the accounts books. It was sold in 1928 for the amount of 7 000 ancient francs.

Modelling his animals with an important economy of graphic resources and sobriety of the shapes, Pompon explained: «I keep many details intended to disappear. I create the animal with almost all its frills. Otherwise, I am losing myself. And then, little by little, I erase in order to keep only what is essential». The sculptor synthesises the appearance of the animal so that he can express its very essence. His rendering of the movement, learnt from Rodin, consists in the combination of several gestures to concentrate the expression. His panther moves forward, motionless, surrounded by an unfinished line.

At the dawn of the XX century, Pompon managed to find an alternative to the Cubism's deconstruction, « the sculpture without any hole or shade », as he liked to say, building a work with full shape, rounded outlines, refusing geometric and favouring traditional materials.