

XAVIER EECKHOUT



François POMPON (Saulieu 1855 - Paris 1933)

Seated Rabbit

Lithographic stone

Signed « POMPON », on the base

Mention partially faded « (...) acheté chez Pompon », at the back

Model created and realised in 1920

Direct carving

Unique piece

Liliane Colas certificate

H. 16,5 x L. 13 x D. 7,5 cm.

Related works in museums:

- Plaster identical to the plaster sketch, 1920, gift Demeurisse in 1989, Musée d'Orsay n. inv. RF4253, cat. raisonné, n. 107A ;

- Plaster sketch, 1920, kept at the Musée des Beaux-arts, Lyon, bequest Pompon 1933 ;

- Plaster model for the execution in stone, on flat base, 1920, Pompon bequest 1933, Musée des Beaux-arts, Dijon inv. 3784 bis (71) ;

- Edition to 4 in bronze by the foundry A.-A.Hébrard based on the

stone : n.1 1922 le comte de La Cour Montalba, n.2 1923 Printz, Salon des décorateurs et other two in 1926 and 1927, one of which was exhibited and sold at the Salon de l'Escalier

History of the model :

In the 1920s, Paul Gouté had a gallery at 21 rue Lafitte (then 38 avenue du Roule in Neuilly-sur-Seine). Between 1923 and 1926, he bought six sculptures by Pompon: this rabbit, the brown bear, the owl, two moorhens and the partridge.

Pompon was familiar with this hard stone, which he also used for the brown bear, the hippopotamus, with the same high bases, and the walking panther (prov. Xavier Eeckhout Gallery, TEFAF Maastricht, 2017). Colas writes *“the lithographic stone carved by Pompon is extremely precise. (...) The volumes are round and perfectly smooth (...). The synthesis is amazing.”*

Exhibitions

Paris, Barbazanges Gallery, December 1920, Première exposition de sculpture française ;

Paris, Société des Animaliers, February 1922 ;

Paris, Salon d'Automne, November – December 1922, n. 1945 ;

Paris, La Licorne Gallery, February 1923.

Literature

L. Colas, *Pompon, L'œuvre complète*, Norma éditions, Paris, 2025, p. 322, n. 79-4, 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.