

Rembrandt BUGATTI (1884-1916)

PETITE PANTHÈRE SE LÉCHANT LA PATTE (1904)

Sienna yellow marble, *H: 18 cm, L: 38 cm, D: 12 cm*

Marble signed «Bugatti», one of the two marble examples for this model

Carved in 1905

Provenance:

Personal collection of the sculptor

Former Ettore Bugatti Collection

Former Ebe Bugatti Collection

Former private Collection, France

This charming feline, from the first stage of Bugatti's working life was originally conceived as half of a larger group, an example of which is in the Musées Royaux de Beaux Arts, Brussels. Hébrard, however, quite rightly decided to edit this model on its own and it was subsequently cast in an edition of just six examples in bronze.

In keeping with other models produced around this time, Bugatti has modelled spontaneously, moving the clay with his finger tips, instilling the bronze with a feeling of lightness and suppleness. Whilst working in this way, appears almost casual in its execution, it is of course quite the opposite, requiring a natural talent coupled with repeated attempts until the desired affect is achieved. In addition, Bugatti was renowned for the length of time he spent studying his subject, in order to isolate a characteristic stance and attitude that would make a suitable sculpture. Nowhere is this more obvious than with the present model. To combine the stretching foreleg, hunched shoulder and delicate balance of this leopard as it goes about cleaning its coat and fuse these in to an elegant sculpture is truly a work of art.

Two marble versions were made of this model and this remained within the Bugatti family until 1981. In addition, six bronze examples of this model were made and sold through the Hébrard Gallery.

This example is made from Sienna marble which was a highly sought after material and it is still much valued today. It is extremely to carve due to the unpredictability of fault line making sculptures such as this extremely rare.

