

Diego GIACOMETTI (1902-1985)

TÊTE DE LIONNE

Plaster, example retouched by the artist himself

H: 11,3 cm, L: 8,6 cm, D: 7,5 cm

Dedicated example with pencil cursive signature «Diego» and
«Pour Jean-Paul Noel 71 «

Made in 1971

*Jean-Paul Binet, friend and important collector of the sculptor,
reproduced in Marchesseau «Diego Giacometti
Sculpteur de meuble», page 207.*



Diego Giacometti, born in 1902, was the brother, practitioner, model and confidant of Alberto Giacometti. He then made a name for himself and above all, he became the reference as a sculptor in decorative art in this field little explored by sculptors. Only Fremiet and Barye left in the 19th century a coherent set of candelabra and lighting in particular. With the help of Diego, Alberto produced in the 1930s for Jean Michel Franck the decorative objects we know, lamps, floor lamps, bas-reliefs and bouquet doors, etc. It is from the end of this decade, 1938, it is said, that Diego begins to create his own decorative objects; these, in very small numbers, first because of the proximity and turbulence of the war, then because after it-he devoted himself totally to the practice for his elder whose fame became universal in 1947. This humble and reserved man always refused to sign his works before Alberto's death in 1966. Diego passed away a few years after the opening of the Picasso Museum for which he provided an impressive number of masterpieces that proved to be in perfect harmony with the architecture of the museum.

The relationship of the sculptor to the animal world is a constant in the life and work of Diego, who carved his first animals sketches in 1935 when he stayed in Stampa in Switzerland. His owls, squirrels, frogs, dogs and foxes are the ones he observed in the Bregaglia Valley and which he modeled in his favorite material, plaster, with natural simplicity. He creates a whole independent bestiary with the dimensions of the hand. Little by little, the animals animate the spacers of its tables, its consoles, often telling a story. They also finalize the corners of his coffee tables and armrests of his armchairs. In 1927, his trip to Egypt was a revelation in an ancient vision of the animal to which the lioness's head is no stranger. It will take the enigmatic physiognomy of a sphinge in its adapted version on the *Fauteuils Tête de lionne*.

La *Tête de Lionne* appears as an entity in its own right in this work dedicated in December 1971 to his friend, Professor Jean-Paul Binet, surgeon member of the Academy of Sciences. At that time, the professor, a collector of eggs, entrusted it to his friends Chagall, Mirò and Diego. The sculptor designed his famous model of the *Autruche* whose belly is shaped by the offered egg.

This *Tête de lionne* in plaster, powerful and voluntary, mounted on an axis like a trophy, had to be directly reworked by the artist as a gift to his friend.

