

Jeanne PIFFARD (1892-1971)

CHEVAL MARIN

Varnished terracotta, with cream, green, brown shaded polychromy.

H : 48,9 cm, L : 75,2 cm, D : 25,9 cm

Signed "J. Piffard" - direct modeling, probably unique, French customs seal for an international exhibition probably, (cleaning and restoration report available)

Circa 1938

Exhibition reference :

Salon National Indépendant (scission SNBA) in 1938

Salon des Tuileries (1941)



Jeanne Piffard was born in Paris in November 1892 ; she entered early at the Jullian Academy, then at the Grande Chaumière one. She became the student of the animal sculptor Édouard Navellier. The latter will have an influence on her first works, especially for her first horses and for the *Jeune Âne*, that she exhibited at the first Salon des Artistes Animaliers in 1913. She practiced direct carve, like Mateo Hernández and André Abbal, that will encourage her to pursue her vocation. At the beginning of the 30's, she exhibited her artworks in the most renowned Salons : the Salon des Artistes Français in 1924, the Salon d'Automne since 1928, the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs and the Salon des Tuileries.

She continues to exhibit at the Société des Artistes Animaliers created by Armand Dayot, following the steps of Gardet, then, in 1931, she showed some of her works at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, from which she will become the secretary ; she is approached by the Sèvres Manufacture in 1933 ... It's a very buoyant beginning for a young sculptor which career will pass a fundamental milestone in 1937 when she is awarded the first Grand Prix de l'Exposition Universelle, thanks to the main monumental door for the Centre Rural realized in collaboration with Jean Dunant. She took part in the exhibition "Les artistes de ce temps" taking place at the Petit Palais in 1938. She was still working during the WWII by receiving a commission for a faun with a water mirror, unfortunately it was cancelled at the Libération. From then, she went through a moral crisis and sets aside animal sculpture for religious art.

The most curious thing about her animal sculptor career was the contrast between the extreme rarity of her artworks on the market and her worldwide renown while less well-known fellow sculptors are much more represented in sales. Among her quite confidential production, we can mainly find terracottas, stonewares and ceramics, plasters and only three bronzes identified in the last three decades ; which we could add an other kind of production, with polychromic decorative edition such as the *Cheval* in Sèvres stoneware. Horses are central to her colourful bestiary. Our Gallery had by the past in her collections an original terracotta *Tête de cheval marin*, very closed to our model.

Our large seahorse, with a spectacular size and powerful expression, might have been exhibited at the Galerie Ror Volmar in Paris which supported the sculptor with several personal exhibitions. In 1955, Piffard organized with this Gallery a special exhibition "Le bestiaire imaginaire" including a selection of large mythological terracotta animals. Our piece could have been exhibited at this event and probably at a foreign fair or international exhibition, because of the customs ink stamp under the piece.

Customs ink stamp under the Seahorse.

Piffard, *Tête de cheval marin*, terracotta, former UDB Collection; Paris, private collection.

