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ALAIN RICхарME
Experts en sculptures XIX^e, XX^e & XXI^e

Auguste RODIN
(1840-1917)

SAINT JEAN-BAPTISTE Réduction n°2 (1/4 of original size) (1878)

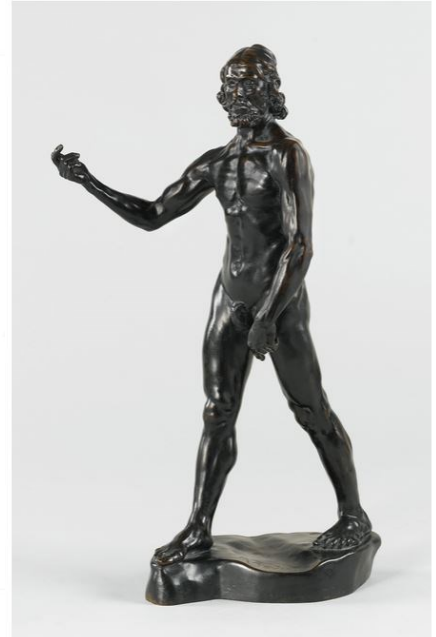
Bronze, richly shaded brown patina.

H : 49,7 cm, L : 17,7 cm, W : 30,2 cm

Lifetime bronze signed "A.Rodin", old cast and edition by "Thiébaud Fres Paris Fumière et Cie Sucrs" (mark), about 13 examples in this size (former Dina Vierny collection).

(N° UDB : 150501)

Cast between 1906 and 1908



Saint John the Baptist is Rodin's second most important work after *Age d'airain* about which the artist was accused of having directly moulded a human body. Successfully exhibited with good critics at the 1880 Salon in its monumental size, two meters high (to avoid the precedent accusation), it followed the *Gate of the Hell* commission. The story of this sculpture is essentially about the meeting in 1878 between Rodin and Pignatelli, an Italian model wishing to pose for the young artist. As Pignatelli was jumping on the base ready to be the sculpture subject, Rodin exclaimed: "But, it is a walking man!!!"... Thus, two sculptures were born from this meeting: ours, and - over twenty years later - without arms nor head, the *Walking man*.

In addition to its historical importance, this sculpture is instructive for at least three

reasons. First, despite of the reduction, a quarter of the original, the sculpture conserves a very strong appearance showing the universal dimension of the piece. Secondly, in comparison with around 350 examples of the *Kiss* edited by Barbedienne, this one is more than ten times less important. Indeed, Thiébaud was a wonderful caster, but not as good in dispatching the casts: it is clearly an advantage -this model appears today to be very rare.

The third reason is a consequence of the second: because of the small edition, the bronzes seem to be obtained directly from a plaster like Rodin did for his own small editions, without an intermediary bronze master model, giving a supplementary quality to the bronze.

Finally, our example, the former collection of Dina Vierny, Maillol's muse who was very attentive about the quality of the cast, is gorgeous with its richly shaded original brown patina.

