AUGUSTE RODIN

TÊTE D'HANAKO known as Type A (1908-1909)

Dedicated white plaster

H : 17,8 cm, L : 9,9 cm, D : 11,5 cm

Lifetime example dedicated and signed on the bun «À la grande artiste, À Hanako, son admirateur, Rodin».

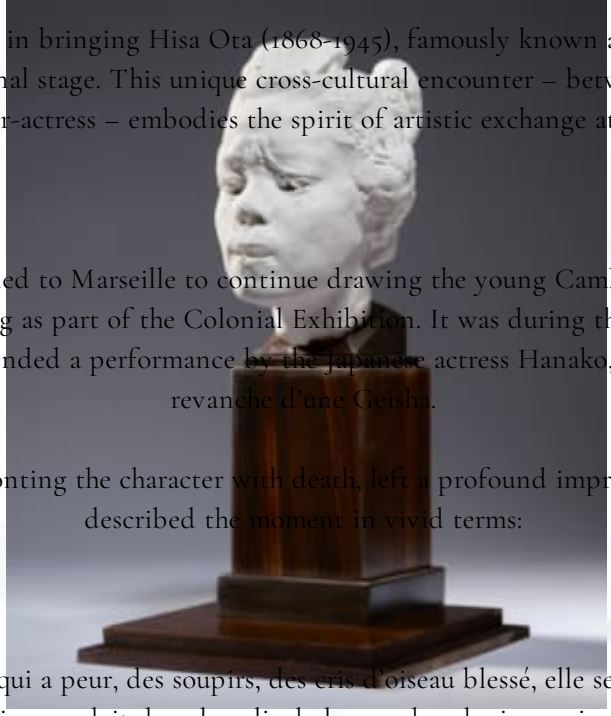
Before 1917

Comité Rodin inclusion lettter n°2024-7280B

Provenance :

Gift by Rodin to Hanako

Loïe Fuller played a decisive role in bringing Hisa Ota (1868-1945), famously known as Hanako to Europe, offering her troupe visibility on the international stage. This unique cross-cultural encounter – between a master of modern European sculpture and a Japanese dancer-actress – embodies the spirit of artistic exchange at the dawn of the 20th century.



In July 1906, Auguste Rodin traveled to Marseille to continue drawing the young Cambodian dancers who had fascinated him in Paris and were performing as part of the Colonial Exhibition. It was during this stay, on the advice of his close friend Loïe Fuller, that Rodin attended a performance by the Japanese actress Hanako, who was appearing in the play La revanche d'une Geisha.

The final scene of the play, confronting the character with death, left a profound impression on the sculptor. Rodin later described the moment in vivid terms:

"Avec des gestes menus, d'enfant qui a peur, des soupirs, des cris d'oiseau blessé, elle se pelotonna sur elle-même, réduisit à rien son corps tout fluet qui se perdait dans les plis de la grande robe japonaise brodée lourdement. Sa figure s'immobilisa comme pétrifiée et seuls les yeux gardaient une vie intense."1

Moved by the extraordinary expressive power of this performance, Rodin sought to capture and preserve its emotional strength in sculpture. From September, he asked Loïe Fuller to bring him Hanako to his studio in Meudon to try to capture her expression. The first sessions ended in failure and the following year, Rodin asked the actress to come back to strike a pose. The sculptor worked on the theme of Hanako for two years, releasing different types and expressions.

(1) G. Lista, Loïe Fuller, danseuse de la Belle Époque, éditions Stock-Somogy, Paris, 1994, p.374.

"With slight gestures, like a child who is afraid, sighs, cries of a wounded bird, she huddled herself on herself, reduced to nothing her body all thinner which was lost in the folds of the large heavily embroidered Japanese dress. His face stopped as if petrified and only the eyes kept an intense life."