

FRANÇOIS POMPON

TÊTE DE LA PANTHÈRE MOUCHETÉE (1925)

Square base.

Bronze, richly shaded dark brown patina.

H : 12 cm, L : 11,8 cm, D : 12,1 cm

artist example signed "Pompon", cast by "Claude Valsuani cire perdue" (seal), two others examples identified to this day, Legs Pompon, MBA of Dijon and Musée Camille Claudel, Nogent sur Seine.

Circa : 1928

This piece is on loan for the exhibition.



Les fragments et les détails sont rares dans l'œuvre de Pompon, et cette étude de tête montre toute la puissance et la sauvagerie que peut condenser ce type d'exercice. Elle a visiblement été le point de départ pour l'artiste. Et c'est un classique dans ce type de sculpture que la partie puisse avoir, à dimensions réduites, autant d'énergie que le tout, le sculpteur intensifiant toujours le traitement de la partie. Nous avons notamment noté cela pour A.-L. Barye et D.

Giacometti, avec cette *Tête de Tigre* et cette *Tête de lionne*...

Quand nous la disions rare, nous ne pensions pas que cela était à ce point, car dans le premier catalogue raisonné de Pompon, il n'en existe que trois autres exemplaires répertoriés : un plâtre et deux bronzes, tous faisant partie du legs Pompon de 1933. Le plâtre est au musée des beaux-Arts de Grenoble et les deux bronzes au musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon.

Artist description:

Pompon was the son of a carpenter and first studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Dijon. In 1875 he travelled to Paris, where he worked as a jobbing sculptor, whilst pursuing his studies at the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs under the sculptors Aimé Millet and Joseph-Michel Caillé (1836–81); there he also met the animalier sculptor Pierre-Louis Rouillard (1820–81). At the Salon of 1888 Pompon exhibited Cosette (plaster; Paris, Musée Victor Hugo), inspired by Hugo's *Les Misérables*. However, until 1914 his livelihood was gained as a sculptor's assistant. In this capacity he served many of the prominent sculptors of the day, including Rodin. It was his long-term employment with Charles-René Paul de Saint Marceaux that furnished him with the means to pursue his own career as a sculptor of animals. His studies of animals in the open air began in earnest in 1902, but it was only in 1923 with the exhibition of his Polar Bear (marble; Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts) at the Salon d'Automne, that Pompon was acclaimed for his refined simplification of nature. His ability to contain the essential character of creatures in smooth and abbreviated form parallels the more audacious abstraction of Brancusi. The collection of 300 works that Pompon left to the French State were eventually installed in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, in 1948. The Musée d'Orsay in Paris has a large collection of Pompon's plaster models.

