

FRANÇOIS POMPON

PANTHÈRE MOUCHETÉE (1921-1924)

Pointed ears and curled tail

Harden plaster

H: 14,5 cm, L: 32,3 cm, D: 6,2 cm

Artist example, written cursive signature in pencil «F.Pompon», dedicated «à mon ami Maxime». (For Maxime Lardiller, practitioner of Saint-Marceaux) - former René Demeurisse collection.

Circa 1930

This piece is on loan for the exhibition.



C'est au moment du foisonnement de 1921-1922, que Pompon s'intéresse aux félins et notamment à la *Panthère mouchetée* dont il produit quelques rares études et dessins. Le modèle présente encore une certaine vibration de surface, et la *Panthère noire* de 1925, d'apparence presque lisse, en apparaît comme le développement naturel.

L'œuvre que nous présentons ici est un plâtre dédicataire, signé et dédicacé de la main de l'artiste. Nous en connaissons deux autres exemplaires, le premier appartenant à l'artiste André Margat et le second au peintre René Demeurisse, ami et exécuteur testamentaire de Pompon.

Il existe de la *Panthère mouchetée* quelques bronzes d'époque et des fontes posthumes produites par Demeurisse et ses héritiers, en plus grand nombre ; tous avec le cachet Claude Valsuani.

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.