

## FRANÇOIS POMPON

### OURS BRUN dit aussi "Ours noir" ou "Ours miel" (1918-1926)

or "Ours des cocotiers".

Bronze, richly shaded dark brown patina.

H: 9,9 cm, L: 15 cm, D: 5,5 cm

artist example of "Pompon" (signed by the artist in the wax), cast by "C.Valsuani cire perdue" (seal)

Before 1933

This piece is on loan for the exhibition.



L'ours apparait dans le bestiaire de Pompon dès 1918, avec les premières études de l'*Ours miel*. L'artiste pouvait observer ces ursidés, emblématiques du Jardin des Plantes, comme en témoigne le fameux épisode de la crue de 1910 où les parisiens vinrent voir en particulier des ours blancs, des ours noirs et ours de Tonkin s'amusant à patauger dans la fosse aux ours.

Un plâtre de ce premier sujet est conservé au musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon. Le modèle de 1921 correspondant à celui de

l'exposition-consécration au Salon d'Automne de 1922 fera l'objet d'une édition partagée entre Hébrard et Pompon, 3 exemplaires en bronze par Hébrard entre 1922 et 1924, puis en tirages d'artiste par Valsuani après 1922. Une pierre, non localisée, fut aussi taillée par l'artiste en 1926 pour Henri Jouvenel, exposé au Salon d'Automne de 1926.

### 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.

