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Wilhelm Albermann (1835-1913), The Blacksmith Of Solingen / - The Double-edged Sword -



980 EUR

Signature : Wilhelm Albermann (1835-1913)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Metal

Length : 20 cm

Height : 47 cm

Depth : 16 cm

Description

Wilhelm Albermann (1835 Werden an der Ruhr - 1913 Cologne), The Blacksmith of Solingen, after 1895. Bronze-color patinated zinc cast on plinth, 47 cm (height) x 20 cm (width) x 16 cm (depth), weight 5.5 kg. Signed "Albermann." on the plinth and identified as a cast by "AKT.[TIEN] GES.[ELLSCHAFT] GLADENBECK BERLIN". Dedication on the front: "Mr. Ing. F. Kuhlmann to the wedding. Management and officials of the Hannoversche Waggonfabrik. Aircraft construction department".

- The zinc showing through in spots, the patina somewhat stained, the right upper arm under the sleeve retouched in black.

Dealer

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- The Double-edged Sword -

The figure is a reduction of Wilhelm Albermann's 1895 fountain figure of the armourer of Solingen, who has always been identified with the historical blacksmith Peter Hahn. In 1839, Karl Simrock wrote the poem "The Blacksmith of Solingen" and thus coined the legendary figure. The first and penultimate verses read:

A blacksmith spoke to Solingen
With every bayonet,
That came to his diligence:
"Oh, that Fritz had it!"

The war took its course,
Many battles were fought,
Which often made him fearful and anxious
In his soul.

The blacksmith had given up his trade to fight for Frederick the Great. Not least because of his strength and will to fight, the battles were won. With his fountain sculpture, Albermann has given the legendary blacksmith a figurative form and at the same time created a landmark for the city of Solingen, which was once famous for the art of sword forging and today still stands for the production of high-quality knives. During the bombing raid in November 1944, the fountain was destroyed along with the entire old town of Solingen. Only the head remained.
The broad-shouldered blacksmith stands securely behind his anvil, his leather apron tied around him, and has just finished a sword blade with his own "weapon" - the blacksmith's hammer. His entire body shows the strength with which he wields the hammer, but also the strain of this activity, as evidenced by the wide open shirt, the somewhat 'untidy' apron, and especially the furrowed face.

However, the blacksmith does not look at the finished work, but resolutely and at the same time thoughtfully into the distance, in line with the quoted verse from Simrock's poem that the battles "often made him fearful and anxious in his soul". There is certainly something melancholy in his gaze, fed by the knowledge of the necessity of forging swords and taking up arms and their deadly use - experiences Albermann had to make during his own war missions. The flowing full beard gives his gaze into the distance an almost prophetic character.
In keeping with the craft of the perfectly formed art of blacksmithing, the detailed casting reproduces the respective materials depicted in perfect form: the leather apron convincingly conveys the impression of leather and lies - also in the back view - like a second formed layer over the body, while the shirt and trousers illustrate their own textile qualities.
Due to its masterful execution and profound content, the "Blacksmith of Solingen", which has survived in its cast reproductions, remains Albermann's most famous work to this day.

About the artist

The son of a carpenter, Wilhelm Albermann began an apprenticeship as a joiner, but then followed his artistic calling and trained as a sculptor in Elberfeld. In 1855, at the age of twenty, he was drafted into the army in Berlin, where he served until 1857. Albermann attended the Berlin Art Academy on the side and began regular studies after his service. While still a student, he completed commissioned works for his teachers August Fischer and Hugo Hagen. His first independent commissions followed, enabling him to establish a flourishing sculpture studio in Cologne in 1865. His artistic activities were repeatedly interrupted by military service, and he took part in the German-Danish War in 1864, the

war against Austria in 1866, and the Franco-Prussian War in 1870/71. After his last war service, Albermann, already a respected artist, founded a commercial drawing school at the request of the city government, where he taught the modeling class and served as director until 1896. In 1890 he also worked for the "Society for the Promotion of Sculpture in the Rhineland and Westphalia".
Albermann was one of the most prolific sculptors in Cologne in the second half of the 19th century. He created numerous monuments, fountains, tomb sculptures, architectural ornaments, and domestic statues. At its peak, his workshop employed up to thirty sculptors and stonemasons at a time.