Erno Schubert (bácsfa, 1903 - Budapest, 1960) - Seated Woman, Circa 1927-1928



3 000 EUR

Signature : Erno Schubert (Bácsfa, 1903 - Budapest, 1960)

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Length : 29.8

Width : 21.3

Description

Erno Schubert (Bácsfa, 1903 - Budapest, 1960)
Seated Woman, c. 1927-1928
Pen and black ink on cream newsprint paper,
29.8 × 21.3 cm
Signed lower right
Provenance
Estate of Sándor Bortnyik (Târgu Mures, 1893 - Budapest, 1976)
Created at the height of the Munka ("Work") circle's activity, Seated Woman marks a critical moment in Erno Schubert's artistic trajectory--from the immediacy of Expressionism to the rigorous vocabulary of Central European Constructivism. The barefoot model, dressed only in a utilitarian swimsuit, is shaped by a nervy, Schiele-like line charged with tension. Yet this emotive contour is abruptly countered by a dense

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vertical hatch slicing through the page like a steel beam. The collision of trembling outline and architectonic force captures, in a single image, the broader ambition of Munka: to reconcile personal expressiveness with the rational visual language emerging from Moholy-Nagy's Weimar.
The subject--a nameless, modern woman stripped of anecdotal setting--signals a decisive ideological shift. No longer a bourgeois portrait or allegory, she embodies the new iconography of emancipation and labour. Her body, compressed within an implicit grid, hovers between living presence and structural module, between psychological portrait and technical diagram.
Stylistically, the drawing aligns with Schubert's Constructivist phase in the late 1920s, likely between 1927 and 1929, when he was active within the Munka group and closely linked to Bortnyik's circle--a brief and sparsely documented phase in Schubert's career, from which only a handful of sheets have survived. As such, this drawing becomes a critical reference point for tracing his stylistic evolution.
Its provenance further enhances its significance. Sándor Bortnyik--Schubert's mentor, collaborator, and one of Hungary's leading modernists--was the country's foremost conduit to Bauhaus principles. After working with Walter Gropius in Weimar, Bortnyik returned to Budapest to establish the Muhely (Workshop), which would later train Victor Vasarely and introduce functionalist design and modular typography to the Hungarian avant-garde. His decision to preserve Seated Woman in his personal archive reflects more than private esteem: it testifies to his recognition of Schubert as a like-minded seeker, striving to merge Schielean intensity with a new kind of visual engineering.
Far from an isolated curiosity, Seated Woman emerges as a keystone--clarifying Schubert's development, illuminating the ambitions of Munka, and underscoring Bortnyik's pivotal role in transmitting Bauhaus ideals to interwar Budapest.