



Furniture By Carlo Bugatti (1856-1940)



24 000 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Solid wood

Width : 100

Height : 214

Depth : 45

Description

Carlo Bugatti (Milan 1856-Molsheim 1940), Bookcase, circa 1885. Wood, pewter, bone and embossed copper. 214x100x45 cm The elaborate piece of furniture, with a rather singular appearance, perfectly represents the eclectic style of Carlo Bugatti's creations. Apparently composed of two pieces, the furniture was made of polychrome woods and bone inlays arranged in geometric patterns. The two lateral beams feature a pewter decoration reminiscent of Japanese ideograms, alternating with figures of stylised insects. The columns of the lower part are covered with multiple copper bands, worked with the embossed technique in floral motifs. The upper part of the furniture features a large embossed copper rosette that acts as a door for an internal cavity, also decorated with wooden

Dealer

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columns. Stylistically similar to the group of furniture created by Bugatti as a wedding gift for his sister Luigia's wedding, as can be seen in the illustrated pages of the volume Carlo, Rembrandt, Ettore, Jean Bugatti edited by Philippe Dejean.

BIOGRAPHY Carlo Bugatti was born in Milan in 1856; his father Giovanni, an eclectic man with interests ranging from science to architecture and sculpture, gave him his first artistic education. In 1875 he enrolled at the Brera Academy, where he met the future painter Giovanni Segantini; he enrolled at the School of Ornamentation followed by the teacher Claudio Bernacchi, and then perfected his skills at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris during the training period of the famous goldsmith René Lalique. Bugatti began his artistic career as an architect, designing buildings with an exotic taste, and then in the 1880s he increasingly oriented himself towards the design and creation of original furniture, alongside the use of extravagant and sui generis materials. The furniture maker and designer is the son of an era marked by the revaluation of the Middle Ages, from which movements such as John Ruskin's neo-Gothic and William Morris' Arts and Crafts were born, and to which was added a strong interest in oriental art, becoming a forerunner of the Liberty style in Italy. Bugatti's works have, since the beginning, presented a combination of floral motifs, but also insects, references to Japanese and Islamic art; the materials chosen are a vast variety of woods aimed at creating polychromes but also the use of inlays of pewter, ivory, bone, metals such as bronze, brass and especially copper, often worked with the embossing technique and finally, parchment: the artist had in fact invented an extremely resistant glue capable of increasing the durability of objects. The first work by Bugatti for which we have written documentation is the bedroom designed for his sister Luigia, who in 1880 married the aforementioned Segantini. That same year, Carlo Bugatti married Teresa Lorioli, with whom he had three children: Deanice, Ettore

and Rembrandt. In 1888 he took part in the Earls Court Exhibition in London, where he presented among his creations an eclectic-style screen, particularly appreciated by English critics, as demonstrated by its presence in the magazine *The Journal of Decorative Art*. From 1890 onwards, Bugatti created his most famous models, including chairs in wood and parchment with inclined backs, desks with embossed copper ornaments, three-seater sofas, but also writing desks, wardrobes and beds. In 1900 he took part in the Exposition Internationale in Paris, achieving great success, and then exhibited his *Stanza-Chiocciola*, a singular invention that imitated the shell of gastropods on the exterior and interior, in Turin in 1902. The same year he was commissioned by the Muslim architect Antoine Losciac to create a series of furniture for the house of the mother of the Khedive of Egypt Abbas Helmy II. At the height of his career, Bugatti sold his furniture factory in Milan to the furniture maker De Vecchi, his collaborator, to move to Paris. Here he devoted himself to the creation of small furnishing objects and goldsmith's work in silver and copper worked with chisel; the works of this period, characterized by a marked influence of Art Deco, are frequently decorated with sinuous curves, floral references as well as the repertoire of stylised dragonflies, to which he implemented figures of frogs, masks and palmettes. Along with the works of his talented son Rembrandt, who in the meantime had trained as a sculptor (his animal sculptures were famous and sought-after), Bugatti's objects were exhibited, sold but also reproduced by Adrien Hebrard, founder of the foundry of the same name. In 1910, due to the poor health of his wife Teresa, Bugatti left Paris to move to Pierrefonds, a city where he became mayor, starting to devote himself to painting and sculpture; in the following years, Bugatti's life was marked by a series of misfortunes, first of all the suicide of his son Rembrandt, who took his own life at the age of 32 due to financial

problems, then the death of his daughter Deanice in 1932 and that of his wife three years later. He then moved to Molsheim, in Alsace, where his son Ettore had been running his famous car company, Bugatti, since 1909. In 1939, he witnessed the fatal accident of his nephew, Gianoberto Bugatti, known as "Jean", Ettore's firstborn, who died while testing a racing model of the company. He died in April 1940, shortly before the German invasion; he was buried in the cemetery of Dettwiller.