



Joseph-antoine Bernard (1866-1931), Bowls Player



3 700 EUR

Signature : Joseph-Antoine BERNARD (1866-1931)
Period : 20th century
Condition : Parfait état
Material : Bronze
Height : 44,5 cm

Description

Bronze with a nuanced brown patina, signed "Bernard. J" and dated 1894. Cast during the artist's lifetime and stamped by the founder Edmond GRUET (1863-1904), active between 1891 and 1904. Circa 1894 Our sculpture is very rare. Only six bronzes of this model were produced. Height 44.5 cm. Related literature: -René Jullian, Joseph Bernard, Saint-Rémy-les-Chevreuses, Ed. Fondation de Coubertin, 1989, model listed under No. 22, p. 272. Joseph-Antoine BERNARD (1866-1931) Born into a family of stonemasons in Vienne (Isère), Joseph Bernard first trained at the École des Beaux-Arts in Lyon before joining the studio of Pierre-Jules Cuvelier at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1887. Uninterested in academic teaching, solitary

Dealer

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and hardworking, he sought his own style, influenced by the work of Rodin. He presented his first work, *Vanquished Hope*, at the 1892 Salon, which brought him initial success. In 1905, he received a major commission from his hometown, which would further his career: the Public Monument to the theologian and scholar opposed to Calvin, Michel Servetus (1541-1553). It was in this context that he created the model for our work. This ambitious and long-term project, which occupied the artist from 1906 to 1911, consisted of a depiction of the tortured man at the stake and an allegorical group representing Youth and Reason. Reason overlooks a seated young couple: the young woman is restrained, her hands crossed on one knee, and the young man, his left hand resting on his shoulder, seems to be speaking to her, gazing into the distance. The artist, who throughout his career was drawn to the figures of young girls (see his most famous work, the *Young Girl with a Jug*, model from 1910), is here interested in the birth of romantic love.

While our model is directly derived from the seated group in the Monument to Michel Servetus, it nevertheless presents a highly tender variation that exalts this romantic feeling: the young girl crosses not only her hands, but also her feet in a pose of great modesty, while the young man, with his relaxed and casual appearance, turns his head toward his sweetheart and seems carried away in a laudatory speech. The modesty and grace of this group are also emphasized by the extreme finesse of the casting and the softness of the patina. The sculptor, who, like many artists, was experiencing considerable financial hardship, benefited, thanks to his hard-earned reputation, from the attention of the great talent scout and businessman, Adrien-Aurélien Hébrard. Also the founder of a renowned foundry since 1902, this shrewd and visionary man entered into a publishing contract with the artist in 1908 for small pieces. After discovering Rembrandt Bugatti and supporting Antoine Bourdelle, A. Hébrard dedicated his first

solo exhibition to Joseph Bernard at his gallery at 8 rue Royale, between May 4 and 23, 1908: among the works on display was a copy of "La Jeunesse charmed par l'Amour" (Youth Charmed by Love) (No. 17). Although Joseph Bernard is known and recognized for his marble sculptures executed in direct carving, he also owes much of his artistic recognition to the publishing policy and the quality of Adrien Hébrard's bronzes.