



Japanese Bronze Vase By Sanshiro onishi - Flying Fish



650 EUR

Signature : Sanshiro Onishi ?????, (1888-1960)

Period : 20th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Bronze

Diameter : 21cm

Height : 30cm

Description

This exceptional cast bronze vase was created by Sanshiro Onishi ?????, (1888-1960), the celebrated fourteenth-generation Onishi Jochu (??? ????), and heir to one of Kyoto's most distinguished artistic dynasties. As a member of the prestigious Senke Jisshoku, the ten hereditary artisan families entrusted with producing utensils for the Japanese tea ceremony, Onishi stood at the forefront of Japanese metalworking during the twentieth century. Born as the eldest son of Onishi Jocho XIII, he inherited a tradition that stretched back more than four centuries and, upon succeeding to the family title in 1926, became renowned for his ability to unite the refined aesthetics of the tea ceremony with a distinctly modern artistic vision. While deeply rooted in tradition, his work demonstrates remarkable

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originality through the exploration of sculptural form, texture, and naturalistic motifs. A particularly rare and impressive work, this bronze vase possesses both substantial weight and a commanding presence. Its elegant silhouette, rising from a broad faceted body to a restrained cylindrical neck, reveals a sophisticated interplay of geometry and organic form that reflects the influence of the Art Deco movement, which found a unique expression in Japanese decorative arts during the early Showa period. The clean architectural profile, stylized treatment of the relief decoration, and emphasis on surface texture and sculptural volume embody the Art Deco fascination with modernity, streamlined design, and refined craftsmanship, while remaining firmly rooted in Japanese artistic traditions. The entire surface is enriched by a finely executed tsuchime hammered texture, creating a vibrant interplay of light and shadow across the dark bronze ground. Finished with a rich and nuanced smoked silver patina, the vase achieves a remarkable depth and visual complexity that enhances its sculptural qualities. The restrained monochromatic finish further emphasizes the purity of the form and the sophistication of the decoration. The vessel is adorned with a dynamic relief depicting a school of flying fish gliding gracefully across its surface. Executed in high relief, the fish are rendered with extraordinary sensitivity and technical mastery. Their elongated bodies and dramatically extended fins create a highly stylized composition that is at once naturalistic and decorative, perfectly in keeping with the Art Deco aesthetic. The composition unfolds naturally around the body of the vase, creating a continuous rhythm that suggests effortless motion through water and air. The contrast between the softly highlighted relief and the textured dark ground accentuates the illusion of flight, bringing the scene vividly to life. The flying fish motif carries a profound poetic resonance within Japanese art and culture, symbolizing vitality, perseverance, freedom, and

the ability to transcend boundaries. These associations are perfectly expressed in the present work, where the energetic movement of the fish is balanced by the calm dignity of the vessel itself. Such harmony between strength and elegance, monumentality and refinement, is characteristic of the finest works by Jochu XIV. Rarely encountered on the market, sculptural bronze vessels of this quality occupy a special place within the oeuvre of Sanshiro Onishi. Although the Onishi family is best known for the production of tea kettles and tea ceremony utensils, works such as this reveal the broader artistic ambitions of one of Japan's most accomplished modern metal artists. Combining centuries of hereditary craftsmanship with the bold design vocabulary of the Art Deco era, this vase stands as a superb testament to the enduring legacy of the Onishi family. Its dignified presence, masterfully modelled flying fish relief, richly patinated smoked silver surface, and distinctly Art Deco character make it an object of exceptional artistic merit, equally suited to a traditional Japanese interior or a sophisticated Western collection, where its quiet power, timeless elegance, and sculptural beauty can be fully appreciated. Adding significantly to its desirability and authenticity, the vase is accompanied by its original signed wooden storage box (tomobako). In Japanese art, the survival of the original tomobako is highly valued, serving not only as a protective container but also as an integral part of the work itself. Such boxes often bear the artist's signature, inscription, and seal, providing important documentation of authorship and provenance. The presence of the original tomobako enhances both the historical integrity and collectability of the piece, further underscoring its status as a rare and important work by one of the foremost masters of modern Japanese bronze art.