



PROANTIC
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Philippe Wolfers, Art Nouveau Vase, 1890-1910, Solid Silver



2 250 EUR

Signature : Philippe Wolfers

Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Sterling silver

Diameter : 11,5 cm

Height : 29 cm

Description

Large Art Nouveau vase in solid silver - Wolfers Frères, Brussels, circa 1900 An elegant and particularly slender solid silver vase, crafted in Brussels by the renowned firm Wolfers Frères around 1900, during the period when Philippe Wolfers (1858-1929) served as its artistic director. Standing 29 cm tall, this large vase features a very understated silhouette: the body, almost entirely plain and polished, gradually widens toward a wide, slightly flared opening. This simplicity particularly highlights the decoration on the lower section, rendered in an Art Nouveau style that is still naturalistic but already slightly geometric. Against an openwork background, supple branches laden with leaves and berries unfurl, evoking mistletoe, a plant particularly favored in late-19th-century

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decorative motifs. The sinuous stems, spherical berries, and interplay of solid and void elements form a veritable relief network of vegetation around the base. This contrast between the organic exuberance of the base and the almost architectural purity of the body lends the vase a remarkable modernity and perfectly illustrates the evolution of European decorative arts around 1900. Philippe Wolfers was one of the leading figures of Belgian Art Nouveau. As a goldsmith, jeweler, sculptor, and draftsman, he developed an extremely personal style within the family business, inspired in particular by the plant world. The reputation of Wolfers Frères extended far beyond Belgium's borders, and its creations were distributed throughout Europe. A few years after this vase was created, Philippe Wolfers commissioned Victor Horta to design the company's new store on Rue d'Arenberg in Brussels, which opened in 1912. This extraordinary Art Nouveau interior has been preserved and is now reconstructed in an entire room at the Museum of Art & History in Brussels, where it serves as a showcase for a significant collection of jewelry, sculptures, and goldsmith's work by Philippe Wolfers. (Museum Kunst & Geschiedenis) The vase also has a particularly unique provenance. Engraved on the body in elegant, ornate letters are the words: "NOBEL'S EXPLOSIVES COMPANY" This company was founded by Alfred Nobel in Scotland in 1871 under the name British Dynamite Company and was renamed Nobel's Explosives Company in 1877. It operated, among other facilities, the large plant in Ardeer and was one of Europe's leading producers of industrial explosives. In 1886, it merged with the major German company Dynamit-Actien-Gesellschaft, formerly Alfred Nobel & Co., to form the Nobel-Dynamite Trust, a vast international conglomerate uniting the British and German interests of the industrial empire created by Nobel. (Nobel Prize) The presence of this inscription on a significant piece

of Wolfers silverware most likely indicates that it was a ceremonial or prestige item commissioned for the company, possibly intended as a gift for an executive, an employee, or a prominent figure associated with the firm. It thus brings together, in a rather exceptional way, two major names in the industrial and artistic world of Belle Époque Europe: Nobel, a symbol of new industries and large international corporations, and Wolfers, one of the most prestigious silver and jewelry houses in Brussels. The vase weighs 480 grams