

Chalice

Metalwork Collection

Accession Nr.:	19427 
Artist/Maker:	Okrutzky, Erzsébet (1901 - 1986) / manufacturer
Place of production:	Budapest
Inscription:	szájpereme alatt OE-mesterjegy és 1937-1966 közt, 800-as finomságú ezüstartályakra használatos fémjel, talpába vésve: „ OKRUTZKY ERZSÉBET ÖTVÖSMŰVÉSZ 1938 ”
Materials:	brass; copper; silver-gilt
Techniques:	hammered
Dimensions:	height: 20 cm opening diameter: 10,5 cm base diameter: 11 cm

The simple form of this chalice – comprised of two cones facing one another connected by a cylindrical element – is counterbalanced by the rich, vibrant, colorful enamel decoration.

It has a traditional construction that can be screwed apart and disassembled into its components. The metal substrate for the enamel decoration of the conical base with a plain edge is provided by a similarly shaped copper cone. The blue background of the enamel is divided by a stylized undulating line that is scalloped like the edge of a cloud. The baby Jesus surrounded by a halo can be seen in the central space above the line, with the Virgin Mary to his left and Saint Joseph to his right, both turned towards him kneeling. There are symbols in the areas below the cloud, including a Greek cross, a cluster of grapes suggesting the sacrificial wine, and a flaming heart (a symbol of devoted love to God). The interior of the base is covered by a presumably later round brass plate, and it then continues upwards in a rod-shaped screw stem. An enameled square copper column with rounded corners forms the node in the middle of the stem. This slender element is divided into four equal parts of alternating colors (dark blue and black) by narrow horizontal bands.

The rod of the screw stem connects to the silver cup with a boxy element. The row of beads running around the cup below its lip serves as trim for the conical enameled copper calix, which has decoration similar to the base. The upper sections made by the undulating line of the cloud border have three groups of additional Christian symbols, including a fish and hook, a key and a heart pierced by an arrow, and a winged hourglass (a symbol of fate). Figures of Jesus encompassed by radiant halos appear in all three sections below the line of clouds, but they break through this line and reach into the heavenly sphere. In the first, he stands before the table of the Last Supper with chalice in hand, he is nailed to the cross in the second, and he appears in the form of the risen Christ holding a flag with a cross in the third. The varied bright colors on the blue background of the enamel decoration draws attention to these representations. The highlighted elements are emphasized by glittering gold leaf baked onto the enamel.

The creator of the chalice was Erzsébet Okrutzky (1901-1986), perhaps the best known and most sought after metalworker producing ecclesiastical items between the two world wars. She was a successful Hungarian participant in exhibitions at home and abroad, such as the 1938 Paris World's Fair and the International Exhibition of Handicrafts held in Berlin in the same year.

One year previously, the Hungarian National Association of Applied Artists had held the First Hungarian Applied Arts Show at their new premises, the Pesti Lloyd Association's Mária Valéria Street (now Apáczai Csere János Street) building, and had organized an applied arts congress in conjunction with this. Works by Okrutzky that were exhibited there, the only representatives of enamel art, were purchased both by the city on behalf of the museum and by the

Ministry of Culture. This chalice, which was mentioned in the detailed illustrated report on the show, was one of the pieces presumably purchased at the exhibition, and made its way to the Museum of Applied Arts from the Art Department of the Ministry of Culture in 1939 (for a price of 200 pengős).

by Ildikó Pandur

Literature

- Mihalik Sándor: Az Első Magyar Országos Iparművészeti Tárlat. *Magyar Iparművészet*, 41. 1938. - 215-222: 219, 246 (kép)

