Statuette - Aquatic equestrian

Ceramics and Glass Collection

Accession Nr.:	88.390.1
Artist/Maker:	Gádor, István (1891 - 1984) / glass-engraver
Date of production:	1920 - 1930
Place of production:	Hungary
Inscription:	alján feketével festve: GÁDOR
Materials:	clay
Techniques:	hand formed; painted with polychrome overglazes
Dimensions:	height: 30,5 cm width: 17 cm length: 15 cm

This small composition by István Gádor, a Hungarian master of 20th-century handcrafted ceramic, is expressive, humorous and emphatically naive—a true parody. It mocks affected, pretentious porcelain figurines, just as it ridicules all manner of posing and display of physical strength.

In the art of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, clowns and circus acrobats were symbols of endangered but noble human values. In this work, by contrast, the pyramid of slender gymnasts is replaced by thickset hippos and a paunchy man. Bold, yet charming and effortlessly fresh, it has the characteristic stylistic features of Art Deco. It may as well have been made in the ceramics studio of the Wiener Werkstätte, which opened in 1917, because István Gádor worked there for nine months in 1920, under the direction of Josef Hoffmann. In addition to the new ideas, the Vienna workshop also introduced him to the technique of hollow-building custom-made ceramic articles and to the use of colour art glazes. Although after graduating as a sculptor from the School of Applied Arts in Budapest, he studied the technological and artistic aspects of ceramics, it was in 1920 that he became a modern ceramicist, who was capable of working independently in a craft studio, as well as of continuously reinventing himself.

Literature

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