



CENTERPIECE WITH MARBLE BOWL GUSTAV GURSCHNER CA. 1907

Centerpiece with marble bowl, design by Gustav
Gurschner, execution by K.K. Kunst-Erzgießerei
Wien, ca. 1907, bronze, patinated, brass, marble,
marked and signed

Gustav Gurschner designed a wide range of artisanal objects, including decorative bowls and centerpieces that served both as functional items and as refined collectibles. These works impressively demonstrate his ability to unite practical design with sculptural sophistication.

A particularly striking example of this artistic approach is the elaborately crafted centerpiece described here: six putti—reminiscent in their posture of classical Atlantes—strain visibly under the weight of an oval bowl. Their bodies, bent beneath the load, are arranged in a rhythmic sequence that forms a continuous frieze, lending the base an almost ornamental articulation. The motif clearly reflects influences from classical antiquity, particularly from sarcophagus reliefs.

At the same time, the formal language of the piece aligns with contemporary artistic currents, notably the expressive sculpture of Auguste Rodin. The non-finito character of the putti—some parts intentionally sketch-like, others bearing traces of the modeling process—evokes the aesthetics of early modern sculpture around 1900. Rather than being smoothly idealized, the surface reveals the artist's hand, offering a direct insight into the work's creation.

The combination of materials further enhances the object's appeal: the putti are cast in bronze and patinated, the base in polished brass, and the bowl is carved from red and grey-veined marble. This interplay of metal and stone heightens the decorative impact while also underscoring the exceptional craftsmanship involved.

Gurschner's work reflects the spirit of innovation and stylistic transformation at the turn of the century, merging historical references with the progressive visual language of the Viennese Jugendstil.

