



FEMALE MASK RESTING ON A HAND FRANZ HAGENAUER CA. 1960

Female Mask resting on a hand, design by Franz Hagenauer, execution by Werkstätte Hagenauer
Wien, ca. 1960, brass chased, enamelled, carved
wood, polished, marked

This striking sculptural work by Franz Hagenauer features a finely chased metal mask poised atop an elegantly curved arm, carved from rich hardwood. The composition masterfully explores contrasts—between materials, textures, and formal language—highlighting the sculptural clarity and refined craftsmanship that define the output of the Werkstätte Hagenauer.

The mask itself is a study in reduction and stylization: an elongated face, streamlined nose bridge, and minimally rendered features create a sense of timeless abstraction. The red enamelled mouth adds a striking touch of color and lends the work a sense of decorative elegance.

Hagenauer's work reflects the influence of the early 20th-century Parisian avant-garde, particularly in its engagement with non-Western sculptural traditions. Artists such as Amedeo Modigliani, Constantin Brâncuși, and Man Ray drew inspiration from African ritual masks and figural forms, whose distilled, symbolic shapes helped shape the language of European modernism. In Hagenauer's mask, similar visual echoes emerge—not as direct imitation, but as part of a broader modernist dialogue.

Unlike many of Hagenauer's wall-mounted masks, this piece is conceived as a freestanding sculpture. The gracefully sculpted wooden arm that supports the head adds a performative elegance, reminiscent of the stylized presentation found in Art Deco window design.

This compelling object embodies a unique synthesis of modernist abstraction, cross-cultural artistic influences, and Viennese decorative arts—making it both a distinctive collector's piece and a significant work within the context of 20th-century design.

