HEAD SCULPTURE WITH BOW TIE FRANZ HAGENAUER CA. 1970

Head sculpture with bow tie, design by Franz Hagenauer, execution by Werkstätte Hagenauer Wien, ca. 1970, brass, chased, nickel-plated, marked

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Even during his studies at the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts, Franz Hagenauer pursued the ambition of working as a sculptor; his early metalworks already bear compelling witness to this exceptional talent. By the early 1930s, he was creating futuristic head sculptures that fully embraced the spirit of modernity and revealed a highly distinctive visual language. Central to these works are a rigorous reduction to essential forms and a pronounced degree of stylization.

This large-scale head sculpture is hammered from brass and nickel-plated. Visible traces of the hammering process animate the surface and enhance its sculptural, almost mask-like presence. The composition is distilled into fundamental geometric forms, while selectively applied details—such as the single eye, stylized strands of hair, the nose ridge flowing seamlessly into the brow, the lips, and the applied bow tie—are deliberately restrained and precisely articulated. This interplay of archaic severity and subtle humor reflects both Hagenauer’s early repoussé works and the formal lightness of his later production.

In an exemplary manner, the sculpture unites formal clarity, modern expressive power, and outstanding craftsmanship, standing as a compelling testament to Franz Hagenauer’s oeuvre and to the unmistakable quality of the Werkstätte Hagenauer.

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