PAIR OF CANDLESTICKS "LEON" FRANZ HAGENAUER CA. 1925

Pair of candle sticks "Leon", three-armed, mod. no. 1519, design by Franz Hagenauer, execution by Werkstätte Hagenauer Wien, ca. 1925, brass, chased, marked

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In the final semester of his studies at the School of Applied Arts, Franz Hagenauer was involved in preparations for the 1925 World's Fair in Paris, the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes. Under the direction of his teacher, Anton Hanak, five of his fellow students, including Hagenauer, created works for a room referred to by the organizers as the "salle de culte." This "worship room," lined with embossed metal sheets, featured a variety of wall reliefs and metal sculptures, including a rider sculpture by Hagenauer. For his contributions, the 19-year-old Franz was awarded a silver medal.

Historical photographs of the cult room reflect a design reminiscent of a Romanesque portal, with elements of Christian iconography, many figures wearing halos. One of the reliefs depicts scenes from Genesis, including the portrayal of Adam and Eve.

Later that same year, Hagenauer presented additional works at the Exhibition of Christian Art at the Vienna Secession, including an embossed relic shrine, Easter candleholders, and a Holy Spirit dove, all of which stylistically connected to his earlier works for the cult room.

The candleholder pair "Leon" and the "Lissa" bowl are likely to be understood in the context of these two exhibitions. The sculpturally conceived candleholders, made of embossed brass, depict highly simplified figures that are already evident in the reliefs of the cult room: figures in ancient robes and rider figures. However, the original meaning of these figures takes a backseat in favor of an ornamental composition. Hagenauer employs a technique that would become characteristic of the Werkstätte Hagenauer: figures are rhythmically and ornamentally composed into scenes, with asymmetry used deliberately to create a lively, less rigid effect.

The candleholders were photographed alongside the bowl in 1928 for the Werkstätte Hagenauer's sales catalog and are also documented as sketches in the Werkstätte's pattern book. The two candleholders correspond in detail to the pair shown in the historical photograph, further supporting the assumption that they were only produced once.

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