VIDE-POCHE GUSTAV GURSCHNER A. FÖRSTER CA. 1899

Small tray with stylized woman's face, design by Gustav Gurschner, execution by A. Förster Wien, ca. 1899, bronze, patinated, Schmuckstein, marked, signed

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Gustav Gurschner designed a number of objects for the gentleman’s study, including inkwells and writing sets. Around the turn of the century, the Jugendstil artist often combined functional objects with figural motifs, most notably female ones. The present bowl, or vide-poche, represents an outstanding example of this approach. It depicts the head of a sleeping woman, her stylized, spiraling hair flowing downward to form the bowl itself. A turquoise gemstone adorns her head, providing a vivid accent that contrasts beautifully with the warm patina of the bronze.

The piece was intended for use as a vide-poche, a small tray for holding coins, keys, or other personal items, or alternatively as a pen tray. It masterfully unites utility and artistry, exemplifying Gurschner’s ability to transform everyday objects into sensuous, symbolically charged works of art.

Kunsthandel Nikolaus Kolhammer GmbH
Agnesstraße 50, 3400 Klosterneuburg
Österreich, Europa

+43 676 406 46 00
info@kolhammer.com

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