THE WORLD OF ART
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Ernst Barlach:
Sculpture "Reading Monks III" (1932), reduction in bronze

€2,200.00

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Barlach was one of the leading representatives of German Expressionism and is famous for his wood and bronze sculptures. He had already been working on the motif of the reading monks in 1921. In this bronze work of 1932, for which there was a wooden version, he intensifies the expressiveness of the linear folds of the robe through reduction and thus, merges the block of the seated monks.

He was inspired by 14th-century art in Florence and by the sculptures and paintings of the master Bertram (1345-1415). Bertram created the Grabow Altarpiece in 1379, which is now exhibited in Hamburg Kunsthalle and displays the primitive gift of narration. Barlach's avant-garde vision sought to recapture this fundamental power. The wooden version was declared as Degenerate Art" by the Nazis in 1937 in an exhibition in Munich. But Barlach's work survived and was recognised and represented worldwide in the most important collections.

Sculpture "Reading Monks III":
Driven by compassion and social commitment, Barlach's creative power results in concentration and internalisation. The joint-like treatment of the surfaces, in combination with the curves of the folds, is like inhaling and exhaling - a vital cohesion.

The circle that starts at the head of the left monk, continues over shoulder and arm to the open book, and is passed on to the arm of the right monk and closes at the shoulder and the head tilt. This circle is where the communication between the two individuals and the book lives. They have read and understood. In the silence outside the fleeting process of life, they have found peace.

We recognise the fine nuances of designed balance in the folded hands of the monk on the right, hovering like a symbol in front of two folds of his rope. Barlach's work becomes a mouth of truth.

"I commend this work as a significant contemporary document before which we can become reverent. Its great potentials today are to point away from the fashionable and trivial sensations of everyday life, a way to discover the essence of what it means to be a human being: To ask questions, discern, conclude to find oneself. The Reading Monks III set an example. They illustrate the address and consolation that comes from books. Joy and depth in understanding the world can rise from a poem, as from this sculpture. Through his forms, Barlach gives us a part of the endless coherence of creation, requirements that we need to approach the meaning of life.

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Edition Max Büchner GmbH
Bödekerstraße 13
30161 Hannover
Deutschland

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That is the religious aspect of his art, love." (Dr Friedhelm Häring, former museum director and curator)

Sculpture in fine bronze, cast using the Lost-Wax-Process and chiselled, polished and patinated by hand. Directly moulded from the original and reduced in size (reduction). Limited edition of 980 copies, individually numbered and with the signature "E. Barlach" taken from the original as well as the foundry hallmark. ars mundi Exclusive Edition. With numbered certificate of authenticity and limitation. Size 22 x 16.5 x 14 cm (h/w/d), weight 4.2 kg.

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