

Lot 37



Auction Decorative Art

Date 17.11.2021, ca. 14:27

Preview 12.11.2021 - 10:00:00 bis
15.11.2021 - 18:00:00

TWO HEADS MADE OF METAL.

Probably Germany or France.

Date: 14./15.Jh.

Technique: Metal, silver-plated (?). Presentation stand.

Description: Each a hollow male head with short hair arranged in twisted curls along the forehead. The facial features are quite stylised.

Measurement: Height (without stand) 7,5cm.

Literature:

Williamson, Paul: *The Wyvern Collection: Medieval and Renaissance Sculpture and Metalwork*, London 2018, p.30/56/88.

The exact function or use of the two quite similar heads cannot be determined with certainty. They could belong to the type of so-called head reliquaries that are preserved in large numbers in ecclesiastical treasuries and collections.

However, these were usually made slightly or even considerably larger. For example, the head reliquary of St Vincent in the basilica of St Godehard in Hildesheim is 37 cm high. The example of the early head reliquary of Saint Oswald (c. 1185/1189) of the Hildesheim cathedral treasure shows how they were worked from silver or gold sheet in several individual parts and were mounted on a wooden core.

On the other hand, they could also be part of a sculptural ensemble. Paul Williamson assumes such a connection in the above-mentioned catalogue of the Wyvern Collection, in the case of a comparably large head, albeit made of gold (Cat. No. 10, p. 30). He states that it could come from a 'Sedes sapientiae' group, as they are known from Essen and Hildesheim. Following this lead, it would also be possible that the heads presented here are from a larger devotional group and that they, for example, were heads of angel figures. The angel reliquary from Saint Sulpice Les Feuilles, today in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Limoges, could be used as an example here.

But even without being able to clearly identify their original purpose, the reduced and yet so haunting design of the faces captivates the viewer with their calm introspection.

Estimate: 8.000 € - 10.000 €