



Inv. no. B 405

SVEND RATHSACK (1885-1941)
YOUNG MAN WITH A FALCON, 1914–17
BRONZE&NBSP;

H: 85; DIAM PEDESTAL: 25 CM

Svend Rathsack originally trained as a painter at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, graduating in 1907. After a few years of painting and having made several trips to Southern Europe and North Africa, he decided to devote himself to the art of sculpture despite his lack of schooling in this field. 'I now want to *solely* be a Sculptor; I have no Sense for Colour. I can't paint at all, I think,' he stated in an interview in April 1914.¹ At this time he had just won the Eibeschutz Prize for the sculpture *Adam Newly Created*,² which would be his breakthrough as a sculptor.

The Eibeschutz Prize was presumably instrumental in making it possible for Rathsack to travel to Paris in May 1914, where he spent a few weeks studying under the sculptor Antoine Bourdelle (1861–1928). He found several friends and colleagues in the French capital, and his works from this period include a headless plaster figure modelled on the same African man who, a short time before,

had been the model for Johannes Bjerg's (1886–1955) *Abyssinian*.³ Upon returning to Copenhagen, Rathsack continued to work on his plaster figure, and a few years later it found full expression in the bronze statuette *Young Man with a Falcon*, which C.L. David acquired in 1920.

The young, naked man is standing, looking alertly ahead with the bird perched on his right hand. His body is turned slightly, and there is a shift in the weight, resting primarily on his right foot. The strikingly elongated proportions testify to Rathsack's interest in reworking the classical idiom, pulling it in a modern, mannered direction – a stylistic tendency seen in a range of works by young Danish sculptors in the 1910s.

Rathsack created numerous statuettes and sculptures from the mid-1910s and in the decades that followed, becoming one of the preeminent sculptors of his time. From the mid-1920s onwards, he did several major commissions for public art, including the *Maritime Monument* on Langelinie (1923–1928), the *H.C. Lundbye Monument* in Tivoli (1929–1930/1962) and the *Greenland Monument* in Christianshavn (1931–1938).

¹ Johannes Bjerg, *Abyssinian*, 1914-1915, SMK, KMS5720.

² Svend Rathsack, *Adam Newly Created*, 1913, ARoS.

³ Interview with Svend Rathsack in *Politiken*, 29 April 1914, see Erik Zahle: 'Svend Rathsacks ungdom' in *Kunstmuseets årsskrift*, XXX, Copenhagen 1943, pp. 110–111.

Published in:

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Leo Swane: *Svend Rathsack: et udvalg af billeder* / with introductory text by Leo Swane, København 1934, (*Vor Tids Kunst*, 17), pp. 10-11;

Lone Rathsack's list of Svend Rathsack's works in Erik Zahle: "Svend Rathsack II: 1920-1941, year 1917, no. 15, p. 57", *Kunstmuseets årsskrift*, XXXI-XXXII, 1945;

Erik Zahle: "Svend Rathsacks ungdom", *Kunstmuseets årsskrift*, XXX, 1943, p. 111 (called the Falconer);

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Lars Dybdahl in Kjeld von Folsach og Nana Lund (eds.): *Dansk kunst i Davids Samling – fra Philipsen til Saxbo*, Davids Samling, København 1995, cat.no. 66, pp. 160-161;

Lars Dybdahl: *Dansk design 1910-1945: art déco & funktionalisme*, Kunstindustrimuseet, København 1997, cat.no. E101;

Marie Oxholm Zigler (ed.): *Art Deco i dansk billedkunst 1910-40*, Gl. Holtegaard, Holte 2015, cat. 30, p. 55;