

**Stanisław Szukalski** - sculptor, draughtsman, graphic artist and art theoretician. Born in 1893 in Warta near Sieradz. He used the pseudonym Stach z Warty Szukalski. As a child, he emigrated with his parents to the USA. Between 1907 and 1909, he attended the Institute of Art in Chicago. There, he drew the attention of his teachers to his outstanding talent as a sculptor. Upon returning to Poland, he began his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków (1909-1913) in the atelier of Konstanty Laszczka. He was admitted to the academy on the basis of a successful examination, despite his too young age. In October 1912, he exhibited his works in public for the first time at the Palace of Art in Kraków; in 1913, his works were exhibited together with works by Malczewski, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz and other well-known artists. Having failed to complete his education, he left for the USA permanently after four years. After his father's death, Szukalski's financial situation deteriorated badly. He worked odd jobs in Chicago slaughterhouses and often starved. During this time, he met many people from the local community of artists, writers, critics and journalists, including William Saphier, critic of "The Little Review", who, fascinated by the Pole's work, wrote a flattering article about him, Ben Hecht, writer, playwright and critic, author of the autobiography *A Child of the Century*, in which he describes, among other things, a visit to Szukalski's atelier. This was a prolific period in the artist's life, during which time more than a dozen sculptures were created, some of monumental proportions. In 1923, the first monograph on the artist entitled *The Work of Szukalski* was published in Chicago. In the same year, Szukalski came to Poland and took part in an exhibition at the Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw. In 1925, at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Art in Paris, the artist was awarded the Grand Prix for bronzes, the Diploma of Honour for architectural designs and the Gold Medal for stone sculpture. He also made a competition design for a monument to Adam Mickiewicz for Vilnius for which he received first prize. However, the monument was never built. In 1929 he founded the artistic group called "Hornate Serce" (1929-1939). He was the initiator and publisher of the magazine "KraK" (1930-1939), in which he published his philosophical articles and emphasised the role of art in the life of the nation. In 1929, a second monograph entitled *Szukalski Projects in Design* was published in the USA. In December Szukalski left for the USA. He returned to Poland in 1936 at the invitation of the Treasury Minister Ignacy Matuszewski, who covered the artist's travel expenses. He received great help from the Silesian governor, Michał Grażyński, who became his patron. Szukalski was given a studio and commissioned to create several sculptural works. Together with the members of the "Szczep Rogate Serce", he resumed his artistic, publishing and exhibition activities. He exhibited in Warsaw, Krakow and Katowice. Between the wars, he created more than 50 sculptures and several hundred drawings, modelled on Art Nouveau, Cubism and the art of South American Indians. Most of his oeuvre was destroyed during the war years. After the capitulation of Warsaw in September 1939, for about two weeks Szukalski, as an American citizen, took refuge in the US embassy. Together with its staff, he managed to leave Poland. In 1940, he settled in Los Angeles, California, where he devoted himself to solving prehistoric riddles and mysteries of ancient human history, the emergence and formation of languages, faiths, customs, art, and the migration of peoples. He attempted to unravel the origins of geographical names, gods, symbols that have survived - unexplained - in various forms to our time. He continued this work, called "Protong" (Polish: "Macimowa"), uninterruptedly for more than 40 years. The volume of this work grew to 43 typewritten volumes, covering a variety of topics and several thousand precise pen drawings of artefacts as 'witnesses', confirming the author's theories, including the pseudo-scientific theory of Zermatism. Winner of the A. Jurzykowski Foundation Award (1973). He has exhibited in Krakow, Warsaw, Chicago and Warta and participated in numerous group exhibitions in Poland. In 2000, a posthumous exhibition of Szukalski's work entitled "Struggle" was organised at the Laguna Art Museum in Laguna Beach, one of the sponsors of which was the actor Leonardo DiCaprio, a friend of the artist since childhood. In 2018, a documentary film was made about the artist, *Struggle: the life and lost work of Stanisław Szukalski*, directed by Ireneusz Dobrowolski. He died in 1987 in Burbank, near Los Angeles.

The work shown is a gift from Roman Romanowicz