

JANE POUPELET (1874-1932)

Rabbit with One Ear Raised

Bronze proof with green patina
Sand cast; no founder's mark
Signed (on the base): J. Poupelet
10.3 x 10.5 x 6.7 cm

Provenance

- United States, Private collection

Bibliographie sélective

- 1930 KUNSTLER : Charles Kunstler, *Jane Poupelet*, Paris, Éditions G. Crès & Cie, 1930.
- 1973 WAPLER : Vincent-Fabian Wapler, Jane Poupelet sculpteur 1878-1932, mémoire de maîtrise présenté sous la direction de Monsieur Souchal Professeur d'histoire de l'art en mai 1973, faculté des lettres et sciences humaines de Lille III, n°41 III, p. 167-168.
- 2005 RIVIÈRE : Anne Rivière, « Jane Poupelet 1874-1932 « La beauté dans la simplicité » », in *Jane Poupelet (1874-1932)*, catalogue d'exposition, Roubaix, La Piscine – musée d'art et industrie André Diligent (15 octobre 2005– 15 janvier 2006) ; Bordeaux, musée des Beaux-Arts (24 février – 4 juin 2006) ; Mont-de-Marsan, musée Despiau-Wlérick (24 juin – 2 octobre 2006), Paris, Editions Gallimard, 2005.
- 2017 RIVIÈRE : Anne Rivière, *Dictionnaire des sculptrices*, Paris, mare & martin, 2017.

Having studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Bordeaux, Jane Poupelet was extremely well-versed in the works of masters from previous centuries, be they European, Japanese, or Egyptian. Among her contemporaries, she spent a lot of time with Lucien Schnegg and his friends and became one of the "Bande à Schnegg." With Charles Despiau, she was one of the principal ambassadors of the purified style of smooth forms inherited from the Greco-Roman tradition, which broke from Rodin's more agitated art.

Early on in her career, Jane Poupelet developed a bestiary of domestic and farm animals. She sketched cats, chickens, cows, donkeys, and rabbits from life. She observed animals as they moved and sought out the postures that interested her. In the course of the year 1906, she moved away from naturalism and anecdote, creating distilled, timeless forms from the immediacy of movement. [1] Working from nature allowed her to make sculpted forms that were precise and exact. "I make a sketch in clay in front of the animal or model. Then I work on the plaster; I add, I subtract, I simplify…" she said.[2]

The figure of the *Rabbit with One Ear Raised* is typical of her work of this kind. Completely free of embellishment or anecdotal detail, the animal is depicted in its purest form, with clean, taut lines and highly architectural planes. It is a universal representation of the animal in the manner of the Egyptians. It is no longer "the portrait of a specific animal, but rather the synthesis of a species. The generic features are direct and well-defined, and the being's movement is shown through a scientific study of its bone structure. With its attitude of absolute verisimilitude, the statuette is raised to the status of a definitive effigy."[3] Poupelet confers a nobility on her humble subject, though she doesn't think in terms of subjects, and even less in terms of a "hierarchy of genres." "For her, the subject is life."[4]

The *Rabbit with One Ear Raised* was shown for the first time in 1909 at the "exposition de la Libre Esthétique" (the Exhibition of the Free Aesthetic) in Brussels, where Octave Maus bought it.[5] In April and May of 1921, it was shown at the Brooklyn Museum in New York.[6]
Jane Poupelet did two other rabbits, one stretched out and the other lying down with its feet tucked under its body. A proof of each of these other rabbits is held in the "musée des Beaux-Arts et de la dentelle" (Museum of Fine Arts and Lace) in Calais.[7] The artist's bestiary includes of statuettes of geese, ducks, roosters, goats, etc., often represented alone.

Even though she occupies a very singular place, Jane Poupelet is part of the current that marks the revival of animal art at the beginning of the 20th century. Breaking from the romantic spirit of the *animaliers* of the 19th century, such as Mène and Barye, the artists of the early 20th century were,

above all, interested in the animal's pure form, its anatomy. Throughout the first decades of the century, exhibitions devoted solely to animal art attest to the revival of the genre. They included works by Rembrandt Bugatti, Paul Troubetzkoï, and the group known as "The Sandoz Group of Animal Sculptors," Armand Petersen, Georges Lucien Guyot, and Georges Hilbert among them. Jane Poupelet remained on the margins of these activities and only once participated in an exhibition by the group, in 1920-21 at the Galerie Barbazanges at 109 Boulevard Saint-Honoré.[8]

At the beginning of the 1930s, Poupelet and François Pompon formed a new association of *animaliers*. Le *groupe des XII*(The Group of XII) included, among others, the drawer Paul Jouve, the sculptors Charles Artus, Georges Lucien Guyot, Georges Hilbert, and Berthe Martinie, and the painter Gaston Chopard. Their first exhibition was held in May of 1932 at Ruhlmann's (27 rue de Lisbonne); by that time, Jane Poupelet, was already ill. The association came to an end after the second exhibition because of the deaths of its two founders.

At this time, five proofs of the *Rabbit with One Ear Raised* are known in addition to the one described here. They have various patinas: black, medal-colored, and green. Three are in private collections, and they are included in the summary catalogue of the artist's work established by Anne Rivière in 2005. [9] Two are held in public collections:
—One was given as a legacy to the Art Institute of Chicago in 1927 (inv. 1927.367).
—And the other was given in 1934 to the Luxembourg Museum in Paris. On loan to the musée des Beaux-Arts et de la dentelle in Calais, it belongs to the collections of the National Museum of Modern Art in Paris (Inv. AM 568 S-D77-1-8).[10]

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[1] 2005 RIVIÈRE, p. 37.
[2] 2005 RIVIÈRE, p. 40.
[3] Maurice Guillemot, "Jane Poupelet," *Art et Décoration*, December 1913, n°12, p.56.
[4] 1930 KUNSTLER, p.7.
[5] 2005 RIVIÈRE, p. 143.
[6] 2005 RIVIÈRE, p. 145.
[7] 2005 RIVIÈRE, cat. 136 and 139, p. 107 (Inv. AM 566 S-D77 1-7 et AM 567 S-D77 1-9).
[8] Anonymous, "Exposition de sculpture française," *Chronique des Arts*, January 1921.
[9] 2005 RIVIÈRE, cat. 133, 134, and 135, p. 106-107.
[10] It is reproduced neither on the Internet site for the Centre Georges Pompidou's collections, nor in the catalogue for the Jane Poupelet exhibition in 2005.