

The richness of his (Gauguin's) talent is in league with the great Rococo and Baroque artists. You get the feeling that his fingers are itching to transform any material into sculpture - and that he succeeds.

Grønningen exhibition review, 1930

JEAN RENE GAUGUIN

11 January - 28 March 2024

Vendelmans proudly presents a selection of sculptures by the French-born, Danish sculptor JEAN RENE GAUGUIN (1881-1961). Following recent institutional surveys at Ordrupgaard (2023) and La Piscine (2014), the present exhibition marks the first showcase of GAUGUIN's work in Britain to date.

As the fourth child between PAUL GAUGUIN and his Danish partner METTE GAD, JEAN RENE GAUGUIN spent the majority of his life in Denmark. His intellectual framework was built - in part - upon a series of travels made during his early adulthood, funded by the sale of paintings he inherited from his father. In Greece, GAUGUIN studied classical figures, while in Paris, he became fascinated by objects found at the Cluny museum, and in Colombia, he encountered figurines made by its indigenous people.

From the 1920s, after having worked primarily in bronze and wood, GAUGUIN discovered the sculptural potential of clay. His reputation grew rapidly after exhibiting a series of large, polychrome sculptures based on classical mythology. These works GAUGUIN conceived following a 1926 exchange project between Bing & Grøndahl (where he was under contract) and the Manufacture nationale de Sèvres. Several works conceived during this period, originally sculpted by GAUGUIN and painted by his younger brother POLA, are on view in the present exhibition.

Using a visual language reminiscent of historic predecessors such as ANDREA RICCIO, the craftsmen at MEISSEN and CAPODIMONTE, as well as *animaliers* ANTOINE-LOUIS BARYE and REMBRANDT BUGATTI, GAUGUIN essentially blurs the lines between great contradictions. Movement or stillness? Art or design? Beautiful or grotesque?

The accompanying catalogue contains essays written by Margate-based artist LINDSEY MENDICK; Rome-based designer F. TAYLOR COLANTONIO; as well as DORTHE VANGSGAARD NIELSEN (Chief Curator, Ordrupgaard).

VENDELMANS