

The iconic 'FLAME LEAPER'

By Ferdinand Preiss (1882-1943)
Circa 1920

Preiss's most prestigious design, the spectacular *Flame Leaper*, is a bronze and ivory young female performer/dancer holding aloft a torch/flame in each hand, leaping across an open flame, mounted on a three-tiered black onyx base.

Height : 35.5 cm high

Signatures : PF foundry stamp, signed 'F. Preiss' etched on the base

Reference

- i) Bryan Catley, *Art Deco and Other Figures*, Antique Collectors' Club, London, 1978, p. 277 (full page colour picture).
- ii) Alberto Shayo, *Ferdinand Preiss, Art Deco Sculptor, The fire and the flame*, Antique Collectors' Club, 2005, p. 164
- iii) Victor Arwas, *Art Deco Sculpture*, London, 1992, p. 167.



Preiss's *FLAME LEAPER* is his best known, most sought-after, and most recognisable design. Other important Preiss designs are : 'Torch Dancer', 'Lighter than Air', 'Invocation' aka 'Spring Awakening', 'Con Brio' and 'Fashion Lady' aka 'Autumn Dancer'.

Preiss is highly respected for his lifelike ivory carving, which surpasses the quality achieved by any other of his contemporary sculptors.

The *FLAME LEAPER* is one of Preiss's theatrical designs and is featured in all books on the subject of Art Deco sculpture, and indeed all books on the subject of Art Deco.

FLAME LEAPER seldom comes onto the market, and the achieved price is heavily dependent on condition – one would like it to have its original torches, ivory to be uncracked, and patina of bronze unworn. The condition of the example of offer is superb throughout, and the torches are original to the piece.

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