

BOWMAN SCULPTURE

BOLESLAS BIEGAS (Polish, 1877 – 1954)

Boleslas Biegas was born in Koziczyn, Poland, and studied at the Fine Arts School of Krakow until 1901, when he left, no longer able to tolerate the restraints of academic training. He moved to Paris in 1902, where he was warmly received by the Symbolists, who were involved with the journal *La Plume*. Having dedicated an issue to Auguste Rodin in 1900, *La Plume* printed a special edition dedicated to Biegas and helped organize an exhibition of his works. This exhibition was considerably more successful than his attempts to exhibit at the Paris Salon, where his works were removed from public view by order of the local police chief. This action was perhaps not unjustified, as he had depicted heads of state and political figures in the form of worms.

Biegas was a multi-talented artist, excelling in sculpture, painting, and literature. His relocation to Paris marked a turning point in his career, leading to significant success. Over the course of his career, he held 16 solo exhibitions, primarily in Paris but also in London, Kiev, and Saint-Petersburg. The most notable of these was his 1908 showcase at the Galerie des Artistes Modernes in Paris, which featured 81 works, including both sculptures and paintings. Beyond solo exhibitions, his art was frequently displayed in group presentations and prestigious salons, such as the Paris Salon des Indépendants, Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, and the Vienna Exposition de la Secession.

Biegas benefited greatly from the patronage of Baron Henryk and Baroness Jadwiga Trütschell, who supported him as if he were their own son until their deaths. This patronage provided him with the financial freedom to create without constraints and to produce bronze works for exhibitions. Among his most celebrated pieces in the early stages of his career were his stylized portraits of prominent literary and musical figures, such as Wagner (1904) and Beethoven (1904), which were exhibited at the 20th Exposition de La Secession Viennoise. Recognized as a trailblazer, Biegas was seen as heralding a new artistic direction that challenged the prevailing sculptural norms of the era. In Paris, he associated with influential contemporaries, including the rising star Picasso and the already renowned Rodin. At the height of his career, Biegas enjoyed international acclaim, with exhibitions across the globe and representation in galleries in London, Washington, and Paris.