

Oscar Nemon (1906 - 1985)

Sir Winston Churchill

Signed, on the reverse: *NEMON*;

also stamped: *ASPREY/LONDON*

Cast silver miniature bust, set on a slope fronted green onyx plinth

Height, 1¾ in – 4.5 cm (excl. base)

Overall height, 3½ in – 9 cm

Price - £15,000

Artist description:

Oscar Nemon was born into a Jewish family in Osijek. His father, Mavro Neumman was a pharmaceuticals manufacturer. Nemon had a natural talent and began modelling clay at a very young age, even exhibiting works locally whilst still at school. He obtained his baccalaureate in Osijek and was encouraged by the Croatian sculptor Ivon Mestrovic (1883-1962) to study in Paris. However, he decided to study in Vienna and applied to join the Akademie der bildenden Künste, but was unsuccessful. He spent some time at his uncle's bronze foundry in Vienna during which time he met Sigmund Freud who commissioned him to make a sculpture of his dog, Topsy.

Following a period studying in Paris, Nemon moved to Brussels in 1925, where he studied at the Academie Royal des Beaux-Arts and won a gold medal for his sculpture. He shared a house in Brussels with the surrealist painter René Magritte (1898-1967) during the 1930's. In 1938 he fled to England to escape persecution from the Nazi's, unfortunately abandoning a decade of work in progress at his studio.

Max Beerbohm (1872-1956) taught Nemon English and he later sculpted a bust of him; he also made busts of John Rothenstein and Sir Karl Parker. After the war he went on to make numerous sculptures of high profile figures including Elizabeth II, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Queen Mother, the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Earl Alexander of Tunis, Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, Lord Freyberg, Lord Portal of Hungerford, Lord Beaverbrook, Harold Macmillan, Harry S. Truman and Margaret Thatcher. However, it is for his series of public sculptures of Sir Winston Churchill that he is best known, of which there are a dozen, the most famous stands at the House of Commons.

In 1977 he was made an Honorary Doctor of Letters at the University of St. Andrews. He had a retrospective at the Ashmolean Museum in 1982. He died at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford.

His works can be found in public collections and museums worldwide including: Cambridge; Kent; London; Windsor; Brussels; Paris; Halifax; Kansas; Toronto and Moscow.