

DISPLAY TABLE HANS BOLEK AUGUST UNGETHÜM 1913

Display table, Hans Bolek (design), August Ungethüm (manufacturer), 1913

Dimensions	50 × 69,5 × 117 cm

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The furniture in this extraordinary study was designed in 1913 by Hans Bolek, an extremely talented student of the legendary Josef Hoffmann, and was impressively presented at the renowned Winter Exhibition of the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (ÖMKI) in 1913/1914, together with a living room. The masterful craftsmanship was carried out by August Ungethüm, who was also trained under Hoffmann and was known for his excellent craftsmanship. International interior design magazines and daily newspapers praised the room at the time for its groundbreaking style and craftsmanship, which brought it attention and recognition far beyond Austria's borders. The entire study was purchased on November 6, 1913, by the then Minister of Public Works, Baron Ottokar Trnka von Laberon, further underscoring its high cultural and political value. Hans Bolek's work during his training period comprises only a few complete room furnishings, which makes this ensemble an exceptionally rare and art-historically significant testimony to Viennese Art Nouveau. The furniture is characterized by a clear, elegant design that was strongly influenced by Josef Hoffmann's style. Particularly noteworthy is the harmonious combination of strictly geometric forms with flowing floral elements— two seemingly contradictory styles that Bolek brought into aesthetic harmony with particular sensitivity and skill. This stylistic synthesis emphasizes the Viennese Art Nouveau's pursuit of a combination of aesthetic purity, decorative expressiveness, and functional clarity.

The ensemble consists of a representative desk with elegant fittings and a matching armchair made of solid oak, an impressive cabinet display case, and a stylish table display case or humidor. All pieces of furniture, except for the chair, are made of solid spruce wood and covered with high-quality swamp oak veneer. The surfaces have been carefully stained and finished with a silk matt shellac polish, giving them a subtle, elegant sheen. A special bonus is the existence of the original keys, which bear the company name “A. Ungethüm.” Particularly impressive is the cabinet display case, whose interior is lined with precious mahogany veneer, giving the display case a warm and deep aura. A historical photo of part of this ensemble is in the renowned collection of the Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) in Vienna and was published in various contemporary magazines during Bolek's lifetime. This unique group of furniture represents the spirit of late Viennese Art Nouveau in the highest quality and incomparable elegance and is exemplary of this period at the turn of the stylistic eras.

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