

VASE NIKOLAUS KANNHÄUSER AMPHORA CA. 1898

Portrait vase, Nikolauser Kannhauser, Amphora Riessner Stellmacher & Kessel, Turn-Teplitz, ca. 1898, signed and marked

Dimensions	12 × 18,5 × 32,5 cm

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The female figure held a central position in Jugendstil in general and particularly in the creations of Amphora's artists. Their work was strongly influenced by the very floral and stylized French Art Nouveau. Especially poster art by the likes of Alphonse Mucha and Paul Berthon in Paris were a significant source of inspiration for the Bohemian ceramic artists in Turn-Teplitz around 1900. Consequently, they produced a whole series of vases with female portraits as their main theme. From purely decorative to meaningfully allegorical, a great variety of portrait vases have emerged from the manufacture around that time.
Nikolaus Kannhäuser was one the most talented portrait painters of Amphora and he delivered numerous designs, including this vase.

This delicate ceramic object, shaped like a calyx, virtually embodies Art Nouveau. Similar to a tulip, the vase is wide at the bottom and gradually narrower towards the top. Using gilding and sponging, the craftsmen of Amphora realised a very naturalistic and pleasant background. The latter represents an intricate forest in the style of Japanese woodblock prints, which became popular in Europe around the turn of the 20th century. The main ornament on this vase is of course the portrait in profile of an idealized woman with flowers, chrysanthemums, braided into her hair. The vessel is masterfully executed, and the painting is particularly intricate and detailed.

Amphora was striving to create high-quality objects and therefore developed their own, patented, type of ceramic known as "ivory porcelain". Using this particularly light type of ceramic material, they were able to create stunningly delicate and elegant vases and other decorative vessels. Withstanding the test of time, these high-quality objects are now widely considered to be valuable works of art in their own right, not solely decorative items.



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