



7076 A copper abstract sculpture decorated with three tear shaped disks on its short neck, the textured body with a central abstract design in gilt on a green and brown patinated ground

Japan 20th century

Dimensions: H. 64.5cm x W. 21cm x D. 14.5cm (25½" x 8½" x 5¾")

Tomobako (original box) inscribed:

Lid: Seishō (dressed in green)

Lid interior: Tanaka Isamu with seal

Tanaka Isamu (b.1920). After finishing his studies at the Tokyo Fine Arts School in 1948 Tanaka became an assistant professor of metalwork at Tokyo University of Fine Arts in 1950. In the same year he also

helped with the restoration of the eastern pagoda of Yakushi-ji Temple, Nara.

From 1967 he travelled extensively in Europe and Asia before returning to Japan in 1968. Throughout his career he received numerous commissions to help in the restoration of important antique art objects and he contributed greatly to the study of metalworking by examining historical artworks. In 1973 he repaired a cloisonné frame in the Akasaka Palace, Tokyo which was built in 1909 and in 1975 he furthered his expertise when given the opportunity to research the lotus petals of the 8th century Great Buddha of Tōdai-ji, Nara.

Having trained under Shimizu Nanzan (1875–1948) and Unno Kiyoshi (1884 – 1956) Tanaka Isamu transferred his knowledge of traditional metalwork techniques to the crafts course at Tokyo University of Fine Arts when he was appointed professor in 1978.

At this time he became a regular member of the Nihon Kōgeikai (Japan Crafts Association) and exhibited annually at the Nihon Dentō Kōgeiten (the Japan Traditional Arts Exhibition) and the Nihon Dentō Kōgei Kinkō Shinsakuten (the Japan Traditional Arts Metalwork Exhibition) until the end of his career.

In 1979 he participated in the conservation of the famous Inariyama iron sword, which was unearthed in 1968 from the Inariyama burial mound, Saitama and is now considered one of Japan's national treasures. In 1981 he received an award of appreciation from Yakushi-ji Temple for his help in producing a gilt bronze reliquary which was placed in the base of the central pillar of the western pagoda.

Tanaka also participated in the creation of a film on metalwork commissioned by Bunkazai (Agency of Cultural Affairs) and in 1984 he became a member of the judging committee for the design of the 500 yen coin. He retired in 1987 with the honorary title Professor Emeritus.

Provenance: Acquired directly from the artist's family collection by the previous owner.