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Original Radiator Mascot from the Legendary Bugatti Royale «Coupé Napoléon» to Be Auctioned in Zurich

On 30 November 2026, Germann Auction House in Zurich will auction the historic radiator mascot from Ettore Bugatti's personal Bugatti Royale. The piece, formerly part of the Fritz Schlumpf Collection, is estimated at CHF 200,000–250,000.

The Bugatti Royale Type 41 is among the most exclusive automobiles in the world. With its eight-cylinder engine, approximately 300 horsepower and a length of around 6.5 metres, it remains an impressive feat of automotive engineering. Only six examples were built, including the "Coupé Napoléon", which belonged to the company's founder, Ettore Bugatti himself. Its radiator was adorned with the elephant figure now coming to auction: the *Petit Éléphant dressé*, created in 1926 in silver-plated bronze after a model by Rembrandt Bugatti.

A Tribute to Rembrandt Bugatti

Rembrandt Bugatti, the automobile manufacturer's brother, created the model of the rearing elephant in 1904. As a sculptor, he devoted much of his work to animals, observing them at locations including the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. His sculptures are distinguished by their precise depiction of posture and movement.

Following Rembrandt's death in 1916, Ettore chose the sculpture as the model for the Bugatti Royale's radiator mascot. The elephant thus became both a tribute to his brother and a distinctive emblem of the automobile. The example offered by Germann is one of only two known original hood ornaments dating from the period of production. Véronique Fromanger confirmed the authenticity of the work in October 2026.

From the Fritz Schlumpf Collection

The history of the radiator mascot is closely linked to the Fritz Schlumpf Collection. The Swiss textile industrialist and automobile collector acquired the «Coupé Napoléon» in 1963 for his collection in Mulhouse, where the car remains on display at the automobile museum today.

The radiator mascot passed to the Schlumpf family through inheritance and was acquired by its current Swiss private owner at the Schlumpf estate auction in Molsheim in 2009.

Germann's November and December Auctions

The radiator mascot will be auctioned on 30 November 2026. Germann Auction House's three-day auction series, running from 30 November to 2 December, will also feature significant works of modern and contemporary art, including pieces by Alberto Giacometti, Ellsworth Kelly, Jasper Johns, Heidi Bucher and Lucio Fontana. The complete auction catalogue will be available online from 7 November at www.germannauktionen.ch.

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Auction Details and Information

Modern and Contemporary Art Auctions: 30 November – 2 December 2026
daily from 6:00 pm
Germann Auction House, Stockerstrasse 38, 8002 Zurich, Switzerland

Preview Exhibition: 20–25 November 2026
Weekdays: 10:00 am – 6:00 pm CET
Weekend: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm CET
Opening Event: Friday, 20 November, 5:00–8:00 pm CET

Lot 41 Rembrandt Bugatti
Petit Éléphant dressé, 1926
Radiator Mascotte for the Bugatti Royale
Height: 190 mm. Foundry stamp “CIRE PERDUE C. VALSUANI”.

Estimate:
CHF 200,000–250,000

Auction:
30 November 2026, approximately 6:30 pm CET

Provenance:
Fritz Schlumpf Collection, Mulhouse; Schlumpf family, by inheritance; Schlumpf Estate Auction, Gasser Audhuy Auction House, Hôtel de la Monnaie, Molsheim, 5 July 2009, Lot 198; Swiss private collection, acquired at the aforementioned auction.

Authentication:
Véronique Fromanger confirmed the authenticity of the work in October 2026.

Press Contact, Images and Enquiries
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