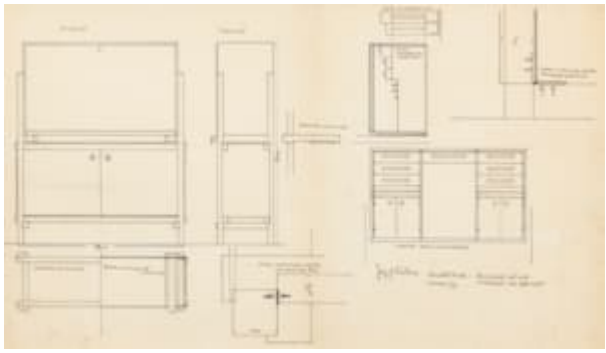

Jozef Peeters (Antwerpen 1895 - Antwerpen 1960)

Zonder titel (ontwerp voor secretaire op schaal 1/8).
Pen in Oost-Indische inkt.

310 x 550 mm

Gesigneerd in inkt.

Artist description:

Jozef Peeters was one of Belgian's most prominent modernist artists, and during the pioneering years was also an indefatigable proponent of the new art. Influenced by De Stijl and Kandinsky, starting in 1918 he evolves towards a form of 'pure expression'. But in contrast to the radical abstract artists, for Peeters the work of art is not the result of applying a strict theory; he Always takes perceptible reality as the starting point for his abstract compositions. The free, dynamic line of the townscapes he paints in 1918-1919 (mainly
watercolors), still betrays a marked Futurist influence. Concerning one of the most wellknown works from this series, he writes: 'With Nationalestraat I seized upon the mechanical element. To this I applied accents that replace the field of reality. The mechanical element had been substituted by the tranquility of our polders. However, on the painting forms still emerged that had to affect vision as hearing actually does.' In a number of works he indeed introduces visual equivalents of sounds.
Peeters would never be able or willing to limit himself to an ascetic formal vocabulary as,for instance, was the case with Mondriaan. Aside from vertical and horizontal lines, he uses circles and triangles to capture the complex dynamic of the world in its essence. In a certain sense he strives for an 'impure' manner of expression, one that to him seemed more genuine than the ethereal visual language of his radical abstract contemporaries. This drawing heralds Peeters' works from the 1920s, like Compositie Metro (1921) painted on a large oval mirror. The spirals and circles and circle-sectors create a centrifugal/ centripetal motion, while at the same time associating the most controversial avant-garde of the era with the most common and natural symbol of freedom. At the time, nothing seemed faster that radio waves, these being most often represented by concentric circles.