

Bust of Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin) as a High School Student, by Kasli foundry, dated 1964.

Cast iron with black finish, measures 15 1/2" tall, 10 1/2" wide at shoulders; the base of the plinth is 4 3/4" x 4". This incredibly massive piece weighs 24 lb. There is a raised Kasli foundry mark with 1964 date to the underside of the plinth, along with a maker's mark "74".

The bust is in outstanding condition, completely free of dents or dings. The bust has been repainted as is often the necessity with older Kasli and Kusa cast iron statues to protect them from rust. Its attractive matte coat of black paint however is a perfect match to the original finish that the bust had when it left the factory.

The sculpture is apparently based on an iconic photograph of Vladimir Ulyanov taken when he was a high school senior, before he became a revolutionary and acquired his nom-de- guerre Lenin. The same photo was also used as a model for the famous painting depicting young Vladimir consoling his mother after she just learned of her older son Alexander's execution for the attempted assassination of the Tsar. The future Bolshevik leader supposedly told his mother that he had chosen a "different path" - meaning an organized movement vs. terror tactics. Little did his mom know that what her surviving son really meant was a terror on the scale comparable hitherto only with Genghis Khan (the major difference being of course that unlike the Horde, the massacre would be inflicted primarily upon his own people.)

This statue is one of the most uncommon and well made busts of Lenin we have handled to date. Both its scale and quality contrast sharply with the ubiquitous mass produced statuettes. It was clearly a limited edition intended perhaps for elite schools, best young pioneer camps, or offices of high ranking bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education. We have seen recent reproductions of the same model occasionally offered for sale in Russian souvenir shops (at prices rather hefty for a replica), but this piece is unquestionably a Soviet era original.

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