



## DEVOTIONAL CROSS

Rock crystal, glass and silver-gilt mounts

Probably Northern Italy, ca. 1650

H : 18,4 cm

Because of its clarity and hardness, rock crystal is often chosen as an emblem of purity and strength in Christian theology. In the 17th century, this stone was used in many reliquaries and devotional crosses intended for both church and domestic worship. It is to this second typology that this piece belongs, whose modest dimensions do not affect its grace. It consists of an engraved glass cross, decorated with instruments of the Passion of Christ, resting on a crystal base. The whole is unified by means of gilded silver frames, partially filigree.

The vase shaped element with helical facets, visible in the centre of the piece, is presents also on other rock crystal artworks made since the end of the 16th century. This type of decoration, called in France "ondoyé en manière de soleil", spread in both Milanese and German workshops during the 17th century.

*Der Breisgauer Bergkristallschliff der frühen Neuzeit* Exhibition catalog, Freiburg, 1997.

*Pierre de lumière. Le cristal de roche dans l'art et l'archéologie* Exhibition catalog, Namur, 2008.