



-phryné- James Pradier (1790 -1852) Biscuit Porcelain Statue



1 200 EUR

Signature : James Pradier

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Biscuit

Height : 36 cm

Description

19th century porcelain biscuit sculpture depicting the goddess Phryne after James Pradier exhibited at the Louvre. It bears on the back of the base a mark in the style of Sèvres or Samson and the mention -Tanagra- (term to designate a statuette created during ancient Greece representing a young woman remarkable for her grace and finesse) Good condition, dimensions: 36 cm high James Pradier belongs to a generation of sculptors from the first half of the 19th century who were influenced by Hellenism, and whose taste for the Antique was revived by the Greek models discovered during this period, such as the Venus de Milo or the Parthenon marbles. The collections of the Louvre, enriched by the Empire, were abundant sources of inspiration during training at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris where Pradier

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was a student of the sculptor Frédéric Lemot. In 1813, Pradier won the Prix de Rome and settled for five years in the eternal city. The success of his *Bacchante* at the 1819 Salon marked the beginning of a brilliant career and secured him numerous commissions. While Pradier's work is fully in keeping with the era of "Ideal Beauty" revived by the neoclassical movement, the sculptor inflected its austerity by giving the female nude, his favorite theme, accents that were sometimes romantic, sometimes realistic, elegant, or sensual. The first monumental representation of the subject, *Phryne*, was one of the most noted sculptures at the 1845 Salon. Having initially sketched a nymph figure, Pradier eventually gave her the name *Phryne*. A courtesan of Athens, *Phryne* was said to have been the model for *Praxiteles*, whose mistress she was. Accused of impiety, she was unveiled by the orator *Hyperides* before the judges of the *Areopagus*, who acquitted her because of her beauty. Pradier, who saw himself as a worthy heir to *Praxiteles*, sculpted her figure in Parian marble, which he enhanced with polychromy and gold, traces of which remain on the edge of the drapery. Inspired as much by the Greek sculptor's *Diana of Gabii* as by the nymphs of *Goujon's Fountain of the Innocents* or *Ingres' Venus Anadyomène*, Pradier achieves a subtle balance of volume and line, the tight folds of the drapery highlighting the fluid, ample forms of the female body. The suspended gesture, the inclination of the head, and the slight *contrapposto* lend *Phryne* a reserve and an internalized grace that instill doubt: is she veiling or unveiling herself? This element of mystery gives the figure a sensuality that blends with the aspirations of "noble simplicity and calm grandeur" advocated by *Winckelmann*.