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Mantel Clock By Lépine In Paris



3 000 EUR

Signature : Lépine À Paris

Period : 18th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Marble

Width : 34 cm

Diameter : 10,5 cm

Height : 38 cm

Depth : 9 cm

Description

Royal Antique is pleased to offer an exceptional Louis XV mantel clock, a testament to the era's zenith of French horological and artistic achievement. Attributed to the illustrious Parisian clockmaker Jean-Antoine Lépine (1720-1814), this piece perfectly embodies the harmonious integration of sculptural artistry, functional precision, and luxurious design characteristic of the mid-18th century. Design and Materials: Sculptural Centrepiece: The clock is crowned by a captivating and exquisitely carved white marble figure of a reclining nude female, most likely representing Venus or a classical nymph. The delicacy and lifelike quality of the carving demonstrate an exceptional mastery of the material, with the figure resting gracefully upon a simulated rocky outcrop, suggesting a

Dealer

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naturalistic setting. Integrated Horology: The white enamel dial, featuring elegant Roman numerals and finely blued steel hands, is seamlessly set within the marble "rocaille" base, enhancing the sculptural unity of the piece. The dial proudly bears the signature "Lépine," signifying its distinguished origin. The precision eight-day movement is discreetly housed within this same marble base, reinforcing the clock's sophisticated integration of form and function.

Gilt Bronze Adornments: The clock rests upon a refined rectangular plinth, embellished with exceptional gilt bronze mounts. These include a central relief panel depicting playful putti amidst foliate scrolls and classical attributes, beautifully complementing the mythological theme. The delicate beading and four finely cast gilt bronze toupie feet further elevate the clock's grandeur and stability.

Period Significance and Craftsmanship: Dating from the Louis XV period (circa 1750-1770), this clock encapsulates the refined aesthetics of a time celebrated for its emphasis on natural forms, curvilinear lines, and exquisite decorative arts. The masterful execution of both the marble sculpture and the intricate gilt bronze details speaks to the superlative skill of the Parisian artisans involved in its creation.

This "Venus and Cupid" mantel clock is not merely a timepiece, but a rare and magnificent testament to the artistic and technical pinnacle of 18th-century French decorative arts, an ideal acquisition for the discerning collector.

Jean-Antoine Lépine (1720-1814) was indeed a towering figure in Parisian horology, whose innovations profoundly influenced the course of watch and clockmaking, laying the groundwork for modern mechanical timepieces. He was much more than just a skilled craftsman; he was a true innovator and a shrewd businessman who rose to prominence, serving the French monarchy and aristocracy.

Here's a summary of his significance:

Early Life and Career: Born in Challex, France, in 1720, Lépine moved to Paris at 24 and apprenticed under André-Charles Caron, who was clockmaker to

Louis XV. He later married Caron's daughter and became his business partner, eventually succeeding him. He earned the prestigious title of Maître Horloger (Master Horologist) in 1762. Horloger du Roi: His talent and innovations quickly gained him recognition, and he was appointed Horloger du Roi (Clockmaker to the King) for Louis XV around 1765 or 1766, a title he retained under Louis XVI and even under Napoleon Bonaparte. This prestigious appointment meant he supplied timepieces to the highest echelons of society. The "Lépine Caliber" (Revolutionary Movement Design): His most significant contribution, around 1770, was the development of a revolutionary watch movement architecture known as the "Lépine caliber." Before Lépine, watch movements were typically thick, with components sandwiched between two full plates and the balance wheel often on top. Lépine's design replaced the upper plate with individual bridges and cocks, allowing the balance wheel to be placed on the same plane as the gear train. This innovative layout: Enabled Thinner Watches: It dramatically reduced the thickness of watches, making them more comfortable and fashionable for the emerging trend of tighter waistcoats. Simplified Production and Repair: By using separate bridges, assembly and maintenance became easier. Paved the Way for Mass Production: This modular design was more adaptable for manufacturing processes that emerged in the 19th century. Modern Standard: The "Lépine caliber" design became the standard for nearly all mechanical watches produced thereafter, even influencing Abraham-Louis Breguet, who often used modified Lépine calibers for his own slim watches. In summary, Jean-Antoine Lépine was a pivotal figure who not only created beautiful timepieces but also fundamentally reshaped the internal architecture of watches, influencing horology for centuries to come. His works are highly prized by collectors for their historical significance, technical innovation, and exceptional artistry.