



Pair Of Large Chiseled And Gilded Bronze Centerpieces Attr. To Thomire



48 000 EUR

Signature : Pierre Philippe THOMIRE

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Bronze

Width : 22

Height : 57

Description

An imposing pair of finely chiseled and gilded bronze centerpieces, attributed to Pierre Thomire (Paris, 1751-1843), composed of three female figures draped in the antique style, arranged in a tripod and leaning back to back. They embody the legacy of classical statuary rediscovered in the 18th century and glorified under the Empire. The ternary repetition evokes harmony, balance, and stability, values dear to the Neoclassical decorative vocabulary. Each holds a torch topped with a flower cone. This decorative lexicon refers to light, knowledge, and triumphant clarity, symbols dear to the philosophy of the Enlightenment and adopted by the Empire to exalt imperial grandeur. The torches, transformed into flowered horns and crowned with removable bouquets, express both fertility and abundance.

Dealer

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Behind their backs, above a central shaft, stands a large openwork basket decorated with cross-hatching. Placed at the top, it recalls the ancient motifs of canephora and was designed to hold flowers or table arrangements, becoming the visual and symbolic centerpiece of the celebration. The circular bases are decorated in relief with winged putti holding garlands of flowers, resting on a molded projection decorated with acanthus leaves, thus defining the lexicon of love, joy, and celebration. Thus, these centerpieces combine in a single composition the themes of light, abundance, fertility, and joy, constituting a true allegory of social harmony and aristocratic or imperial splendor. Centerpieces of this type were designed to adorn the grandest aristocratic tables, often made in pairs or as sets for palaces and private mansions. The perfectly preserved gilding reveals the subtlety of the carving and the exceptional quality of the workmanship, characteristic of the Thomire workshop. The upper elements of the torches, finished with detachable bouquets, underline the technical and ornamental refinement of the whole. This pair, with its exceptional dimensions (57 cm high), its decorative richness, and the quality of its gilding, constitutes a rare and prestigious example of the art of chased and gilded bronze during the Empire. It illustrates the technical and aesthetic mastery of Thomire, whose reputation extended throughout Europe and whose creations are featured in royal and imperial collections. Pierre-Philippe Thomire, a bronze-caster and founder, was one of the greatest Parisian artisans of his time. Trained under Gouthière, he quickly became a purveyor to the court under Louis XVI, then worked for Napoleon I and the imperial aristocracy. His works, combining monumentality and refinement, mark the apogee of the Empire style and embody the excellence of French gilded bronze. Pairs of centerpieces can be found in major museums such as the Louvre and the Château de Fontainebleau. Pair of gilt bronze centerpieces by

Thomire, preserved at the Louvre Museum, Department of Decorative Arts, Paris. A similar pair is preserved at the Château de Fontainebleau, in the Emperor's dining room. Examples of comparable goldsmithery and gilt bronzes can be found in: H. Ottomeyer & P. Pröschel, *Vergoldete Bronzen, Die Bronzearbeiten des Spätbarock und Klassizismus*, Munich, 1986. Several have been sold at auction, with prices ranging between... Monumental Empire period centerpiece, attributed to Pierre-Philippe Thomire, first quarter of the 19th century, sold at Christie's, Paris, November 17, 2010, lot 146: EUR 85,000 (estimate EUR 75,000-100,000). Bibliography Hans Ottomeyer & Peter Pröschel, *Vergilded Bronzes, The Bronze Works of the Baroque and Classical Period*, Munich, Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1986. Pierre Verlet, *French Gilded Bronzes of the 18th Century*, Paris, 1987. Christian Baulez, "Thomire, Founder-Cutter," *Bulletin of the Society for the History of French Art*, 1983. Dimensions: Height: 57 cm - Width: 22 cm