



Early 19th Empire Terracotta Portrait Bust Of Virginie-constance Lemerancier



1 800 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Terracotta

Width : 17

Height : 36,5

Depth : 16

Description

Terracotta bust of Virginie-Constance Lemerancier (1812-1875), circa 1818. Virginie-Constance Lemerancier was the daughter of Louis-Jean-Népomucène Lemerancier, a French poet and playwright. An accident in his childhood left him partially paralyzed. Jean-François Ducis wrote of him: "His soul resides in the living part, with flashes of wit, a profound vision, and a boldness of conception that make him a fascinating phenomenon in my eyes, while the dead part makes him a martyr who moves me, a hero of suffering who astonishes me, and it is all this that explains to me the great passions he inspired and felt, for women have eyes to understand and adore such marvels." Early in his career, he benefited from the patronage of Queen Marie Antoinette, who, when he was only 17,

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commissioned him to stage his tragedy Meleager. The opera was performed only once, however, although, given in the presence of the queen, the princess, and the entire court, it was triumphantly applauded. Lemerrier was initially close to Bonaparte. He frequented his salon after his marriage to Josephine, and his tragedy Ophis, on an Egyptian subject, was performed on the very day that news of the military successes of the Egyptian expedition reached Paris. After the coup of 18 Brumaire, Lemerrier was a regular guest at Malmaison, but his frankness began to irritate the First Consul, who nicknamed him "my little Roman." A republican and liberal, he henceforth avoided all contact with Napoleon, only going to the Tuileries Palace for official receptions of the French Academy, to which he was elected on April 11, 1810. Lemerrier was also the fiercest opponent of Victor Hugo's election to the French Academy, where, ironically, Hugo succeeded him in seat number 14. In accordance with tradition, upon his election on June 5, 1841, Victor Hugo delivered the now-famous eulogy for his most bitter adversary. In this speech, Hugo cited the poet among the few who had not knelt before Napoleon. Constance-Virginie was the only and beloved daughter of Nepomucene. Her terracotta portrait was commissioned by her father when she was about six years old, in a style still strongly influenced by the Empire. Her bust, deeply imbued with classicism, is disarmingly beautiful. It was she who bequeathed the portrait of her father to the Louvre Museum, where it remains today. The bust has a magnificent original patina. It rests on an ebonized wood base.

Dimensions: H 36.5 cm W 17 cm D 16 cm

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