



Pair Of Empire Ewers In Finely Chased And Gilded Bronze And White Carrara Marble



65 000 EUR

Signature : Claude Galle

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Description

France, Paris, circa 1805-1810. Attributed to Claude Galle (1759-1815). Entirely crafted in finely chased and gilded bronze, alternating matte and burnished gilding, and combined with white Carrara marble, these ewers present a composition of great ornamental richness and perfect architectural balance. Each vase consists of an elongated marble body, sculpted with stylized leaves and acanthus, punctuated in its center by a wide band of gilded bronze, adorned with a procession of young women dancing and celebrating Love, treated in bas-relief with remarkable fineness of chasing. This lively decoration, inspired by Antiquity, fits perfectly within the neoclassical aesthetic of the Empire period. The upper part of the vase narrows and receives a neck emerging from a leafy bouquet,

Dealer

Collection

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punctuated by a band with a frieze of channels, enriched with a male mask standing out against foliage. Attached to this mascaron is a detached handle, masterfully sculpted as a winged female figure, the personification of Fame, holding in both hands the rear part of the simulated spout, forming an elegant foliate pouring spout. The whole rests on a flared pedestal, richly decorated with rings, tori, and rows of gadroons, itself placed on a square marble base, supported by a quadrangular plinth, giving the object a monumentality worthy of the grandest palatial decorations. Model and attribution: This model of ewer, with its skillfully balanced composition, enjoyed immense success among leading Parisian collectors, and then more broadly across Europe, in the early years of the 19th century. It is unanimously attributed to the bronze sculptor Claude Galle, who developed several variations, mainly in patinated or gilded bronze, and more rarely--for the most luxurious examples--by combining bronze with bodies of marble or hardstone, as is the case for the present ewers.

?Comparable Works Several pairs of ewers in bronze alone are now well documented: o A first pair, formerly on the London art market, illustrated in H. Ottomeyer and P. Pröschel, *Vergoldete Bronzen. Die Bronzearbeiten des Spätbarock und Klassizismus*, Band I, Munich, 1986, p. 364, fig. 5.12.6. o A second, from the Mancel-Coti collection, published in C. Bizot, *Mobilier Directoire Empire*, Éditions Massin, Paris, p. 65. o A third, preserved in the collections of the Mobilier national in Paris, reproduced in M.-F. Dupuy-Baylet, *L'Heure, le Feu, la Lumière. Les bronzes du Mobilier national 1800-1870*, Éditions Faton, Dijon, 2010, p. 248-249. Ewers combining gilt bronze and marble or hardstones are, on the other hand, extremely rare. In this regard, it is worth citing an exceptional testimony from the post-mortem inventory of Louis-Alexandre Berthier, Prince of Wagram, drawn up in 1815 in his Parisian townhouse: "Two large vases in so-called Siberian jasper

marble imitating flowered jasper, given to His Highness the Prince of Wagram by His Majesty Emperor Alexander I of Russia, said vases in the form of ewers each having a handle formed by a winged female figure in gilt copper and embellished with matte gilt bronze... 1,200 francs." Claude Galle. Claude Galle is among the most important Parisian bronze casters of the late 18th century and the Empire period. After collaborating with the foundryman Antoine-André Ravrio and with Jean-Hauré--through whom he participated in the creation of bronzes for Guillaume Benneman's cabinetmaking for the Crown--he became, during the Consulate and the Empire, one of Pierre-Philippe Thomire's main competitors. He supplied numerous bronze furniture pieces to the Imperial Furniture Repository, notably contributing to the decoration of the palaces of Compiègne and Fontainebleau, as well as the imperial residences of the Quirinal Palace in Rome and the Stupinigi Palace in Turin. He retired from business around 1813, leaving his son Gérard-Jean Galle to take over the workshop.