



Decorated Terracotta Vase Signed Jean Paulet



420 EUR

Signature : Jean PAULET (1931 - 2012)

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Terracotta

Diameter : 19 cm

Height : 26 cm

Description

Domed terracotta vase, decorated and signed Paulet. Provenance: the artist's private collection. Dimensions: height 26 cm, diameter 19 cm. Jean Paulet (1931-2012), French ceramist and pioneer in the revival of the ancient polished earth technique, was one of the first ceramists to rework polished earth using traditional methods. While high-temperature firing of stoneware was fashionable, his work with smoked clay at lower temperatures paved the way for young contemporary ceramists such as Pierre Bayle, Loul Combres, and Jean-Paul Azais. His work also gave new impetus to the historic pottery village of Saint Jean de Fos in the Hérault region. Born in 1931, and confronted with the cruelty and hardship of the Second World War, Jean Paulet longed for a life in harmony with nature. The

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youngest of five children born to a widowed mother, he quickly decided to pursue the craft of pottery. His training at the Fontcarrade school, run by Emilie Decanis, allowed him to meet many young people, including the future sculptor César Baldaccini. He then began working as a potter in various kitchenware workshops, first in Anduze, then in Aubagne in 1948-1949, and finally in Uzès in 1951. After his military service, he established his first workshop in Aiguelongue, near Montpellier, in 1954. His aim was to produce unique pieces fired in a small wood-fired kiln and to polish them rather than glaze them, unlike his neighboring colleagues. He sought to assert his style and break with local tradition. Success followed, with exhibitions in Montpellier. But the wood-fired kiln led to tragedy, setting fire to his workshop and home! Jean Paulet had to leave again! In the neighboring village of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, near Saint-Jean-de-Fos, famous in the 19th century for its pottery, Jean chose a bakery with an old wood-fired oven. And he would stay there for over fifty years! From old quarries, he extracted the red clay that he prepared himself. His first creations were food and utilitarian items (plates, pitchers, candlesticks, etc.) with varied shades of red and brown due to the wood firing. This style appealed to the public, earning him local renown and a few exhibitions. In June 1955, Jean Paulet was accepted to the Casa Velázquez in Madrid to study Salamanca pottery, but the outbreak of the Algerian War cut short this opportunity. In 1957, he met Jean Maydoyon, the former director of the Sèvres National Porcelain Manufactory. In 1962, he had the opportunity to discover porcelain throwing at the wheel in Sèvres. Jean Paulet loved the symbolism of ancient Greek pottery. He revived this style by doing away with glaze. His work coincided with his meeting the young Loul Combres. They both began learning the technique of polished clay. Together, they worked temporarily for the Lozère artisans' cooperative. In an interview with AIC, Loul Combres

explained that he was greatly influenced during his training by Jean Paulet's work, particularly his low-temperature firing, which at the time was scorned by all stoneware enthusiasts. Jean Paulet decided to use a new clay, that from the quarry in Argeliers, a neighboring village. His pieces were then engraved and sculpted in relief with floral motifs, landscapes, and other designs. Over time, he devoted himself to modeling and sculpting until his death in 2012. Alongside his work with clay, Jean Paulet taught at the Collège Pézenas. In 2016, the Argileum Museum in Saint Jean de Fos organized a retrospective of the artist's work. Under the patronage of Loul Combres, the Jean Paulet workshop, established in 2016, has become a true center of research where eleven potters meet regularly. Text © Christine Lavenu (c. 22/06/2021) Sources: Biography of Jean Paulet by Christiane Paulet; La Gazette de Drouot; Art Valorem - April 2017; AIC-Loul Combres