Decorated Terracotta Disc Signed Jean Paulet



320 EUR

Signature : Jean PAULET (1931 - 2012)

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Terracotta

Diameter : 28 cm

Height : 2 cm

Description

Decorated terracotta disc, unsigned. Provenance: the artist's private collection. Dimensions: diameter 28 cm, height 2 cm. Jean Paulet (1931-2012), French ceramist and pioneer in the revival of the ancient polished earth technique. Jean Paulet was one of the first ceramists to rework polished earth using the ancient method. While the trend was towards high-temperature stoneware firing, his work with low-temperature, smoke-fired clays 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 aspired to a life in harmony with nature. The

Dealer

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youngest of five children born to a widowed mother, he quickly decided to pursue the manual craft of pottery. His training at the Fontcarrade school, directed 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 like 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 is drawn to the symbolism of ancient Greek pottery. He revives this style by dispensing with glaze. His work coincides with his meeting the young Loul Combres. They both begin to explore the technique of polished clay. And together, they work temporarily for the Lozère artisans' cooperative. In an interview with AIC, Loul

Combres explained that he was greatly influenced during his training by the work of Jean Paulet, particularly his low-temperature firing technique, 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 subjects. 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 Loul Combres's patronage, the Jean Paulet workshop, established in 2016, has become a true center for research where eleven potters meet regularly. Text © Christine Lavenu (c. 06/22/2021) Sources: Biography of Jean Paulet by Christiane Paulet La gazette de Drouot Art Valorem - April 2017 AIC-Loul Combres