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Diana Of Gabii - Bronze Founder: Victor Paillard, Circa 1850



1 450 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Restauré par notre atelier

Material : Bronze

Width : 35 cm

Height : 68 cm

Depth : 19 cm

Description

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INFORMATION FROM OUR WEBSITEA
magnificent
and remarkable mantel clock in red griotte
marble, adorned with gilt
and patinated bronze, dating from the Napoleon
III period, circa
1850-1860, and standing an impressive 68 cm
high. It is
surmounted by a superb bronze figure
representing Diana of Gabii, a
celebrated model of ancient sculpture whose
sculptural presence lends
the ensemble classical elegance and distinguished
decorative appeal.
The exceptional quality of this work is confirmed
by the marks of

Dealer

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Victor Paillard, a renowned bronze founder and sculptor, whose crowned initials, V.P., are stamped on the bronze terrace, while his name appears on the dial: "V. PAILLARD / Ft DE BRONZES / À PARIS". His stamp is also present on the movement. The mechanism additionally bears the mark of the clockmaker "Rodier à Paris", a professional listed in the Tardy dictionary of clockmakers. The combination of these signatures provides particularly interesting evidence of the collaboration between leading Parisian craftsmen during the Second Empire.

The composition rests upon a substantial architectural base in red griotte marble, distinguished by its rich colouring and intricate network of veins and cloud-like patterns in deep red, burgundy and ochre tones. The marble has been highly polished, enhancing its natural variations and emphasising the luxurious character of the material. The central body, with its gently curved lines, is articulated by projecting sections, prominent mouldings and carefully arranged setbacks. Gilt-bronze bands accentuate the lower sections and define the volumes, creating a refined contrast with the depth of the marble. At the top, a moulded terrace supports the sculpture, whose nuanced brown patina and gilded highlights harmonise beautifully with the warm tones of the pedestal. The ensemble reflects a well-balanced design combining architectural discipline, sumptuous materials and decorative elegance.

Victor Paillard (1805-1886) was one of the leading French artistic bronze founders of the nineteenth century. Following his training under the bronze founder and chaser Jean-François Denière, he established his own workshop specialising in artistic and furnishing bronzes in 1835. His production included clocks, statuettes, candelabra and numerous decorative objects, admired for the quality of their casting, the precision of their chasing and the care lavished on their finishes. Awarded prizes at the French Industrial Product Exhibitions, including a gold medal in 1849, he achieved considerable renown and took part in the major Universal Exhibitions of the nineteenth century. His workshop produced both original creations and works based on existing sculptural models. The marks on this clock associate it with his establishment and demonstrate the importance attached to the maker's signature in the production of Parisian ornamental bronzes.

The crowning sculpture represents Diana of Gabii, an iconic figure of ancient statuary, traditionally identified as Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt and counterpart of the Greek goddess Artemis. The goddess is depicted in a natural and restrained gesture, adjusting her garment with a fibula, an ancient brooch used to fasten drapery at the shoulder. Her raised arm, delicately modelled hands and gently inclined head create an attitude that is both graceful and contemplative. Her

wavy hair, gathered into a chignon, frames a face with harmonious features, while the garment, animated by an abundance of finely modelled folds, demonstrates the bronze founder's remarkable skill. The patinated bronze displays subtle tonal variations, ranging from deep brown to golden-brown highlights that catch the light on the raised details. A tree trunk positioned behind the figure provides discreet structural support without disturbing the elegance of the composition. This interpretation of the celebrated ancient model perfectly reflects the nineteenth-century taste for the great masterpieces of Greco-Roman sculpture.

A description from the base upwards reveals the remarkable coherence of this mantel clock. The broad rectangular plinth, with softened edges and successive mouldings, provides a strong visual foundation. The main body, slightly flared towards the bottom, features curved sides that soften the monumentality of the marble while showcasing its spectacular veining.

At the front, the white enamel circular dial stands out sharply against the dark red background. Its black Roman numerals, elegant hands and gilt-bronze bezel form a highly legible ensemble framed by the richness of the mineral material. The upper cornice, projecting generously and enhanced by mouldings, creates an architectural transition between the body of the clock and the terrace supporting the figure. Finally, Diana rises above the entire composition like an independent sculptural work,

introducing verticality and movement to the geometric structure of the pedestal.

With its generous proportions, the striking combination of red griotte marble and bronzes with contrasting patinas, and the presence of an instantly recognisable ancient sculptural model, this clock is an exceptional choice for a classical interior or a collection of nineteenth-century bronzes and horology. The combination of the signatures of Victor Paillard and Rodier further enhances its appeal to collectors seeking a well-documented piece in which decorative quality is accompanied by genuine historical significance.

Original movement, unaltered. Strikes the hours and half-hours on an antique bell, producing a clear and authentic sound.