

La Pendulerie



Deverberie

Gilt Bronze Mantel Clock “The Magic Lantern”, Empire period

Case Attributed to Jean-Simon Deverberie (1764 - 1824)

Gilt Bronze Mantel Clock “The Magic Lantern”

Paris, Empire period, circa 1800

Height 46 cm, width 24 cm, depth 13 cm

An extremely fine gilt bronze mantle clock of eight-day duration, the white enamel dial with Roman and Arabic numerals and gilt bronze hands for the hours and minutes. The movement, with lever escapement and silk thread suspension, strikes the hour and half hour, with outside count wheel.

The case, in the form of a magic lantern, has a beaded bezel and is decorated with blue enamel rosettes; it is surmounted by a flaming torch pierced with stars and hearts. The pendulum bob is formed as a butterfly. The magic lantern is carried on the back of a striding Cupid with enamel eyes who carries a quiver of arrows and a bow. He stands on an oval plinth, featuring a cast frieze with winged putti playing around a central vase, is raised on feathered eagle's claw feet.

A clock with a very similar case, but with a patinated bronze Cupid, is illustrated in Pierre Kjellberg, *Encyclopédie de la Pendule Française du Moyen Age au XXe Siècle*, 1997, p. 447, pl. D. An almost identical gilt bronze clock whose dial is signed “Pinart à L’Orient” is illustrated in Elke Niehüser, *Die Französische Bronzeuhr, Eine Typologie der Figürlichen Darstellungen*, 1997: detail shot on the front cover; p. 129, colour pl. 210, and p. 230, pl. 658. An almost identical clock case is pictured in the

undated catalogue of the François Duesberg museum, p. 38.

“Magic Lantern” clocks almost certainly derive from the prints, drawings, and statuettes showing travelling lanternists that circulated during the 19th century. Magic lantern shows, which had become very successful as of the late 18th century, included a range of slides, including comic and historical images and even topographical views. The age of the travelling lanternist came to an end once inexpensive lanterns for home use began to be offered.

The magic lantern was invented around the mid 17th century, most probably by Christiaan Huygens (1629-95). It was an early form of slide projector, consisting of a domed top and rectangular box in which a candle or oil lamp was placed. The slides were placed before a lens and lit by a light source, so that they were projected onto a wall or a sheet.

The design of the present case, however, in which Cupid points to the dial, suggests an interesting interpretation: perhaps he means to indicate that Time - or possibly Love itself - is merely an illusion. Further references to Love are provided by the pierced hearts around the lantern top and the flaming torch.

Exhibitions

Rive Gauche

Artist description:

Jean-Simon Deverberie (1764-1824) was an extremely successful designer, bronze manufacturer and marchand-mercier. Until 1800 he was recorded in the rue Barbette; four years later he was at Boulevard du Temple and from 1812 until 1824 his business Deverberie & Compagnie was based at rue des Fosses-du-Temple. Deverberie was the most important artists of his time to create a series of bronzes and almost certainly the first to make a clock case celebrating the theme of the “noble savage”.