

# La Pendulerie



**Le Riche - Sèvres**

**Exceptional Sèvres Bisque Porcelain Group “The Judgment of Sancho Panza, Governor of the Island of Barataria”, second third of the 18th century**

After a Model by Josse-François-Joseph Le Riche

Paris, second third of the 18th century, circa 1770-1780

Height 35.5cm; width and depth of the base: 24.8 cm x 21.5 cm

The present group depicts a square terrace with simulated cobblestones, featuring an animated scene with several figures, both male and female. They have come to ask Sancho Panza, who is seated on a curule seat and is wearing a plumed hat, to render a judgment on their imaginary problems.

## HISTORICAL

Bisque porcelain figures from the Sèvres Manufacture Royale are among the pieces most sought-after by collectors of antique porcelain and of art objects in general. By 1756 the factory had begun to produce unglazed porcelain pieces that were given just one firing. This new type of “bisque porcelain” became an immediate success with collectors of the period. Encouraged by this response, the Manufacture called on the best artists of the time to create new and novel pieces. Among them were the famous sculptors Etienne-Maurice Falconet, Louis-Simon Boizot and Josse-François-Joseph Le Riche, who supervised the workshops where the pieces were created and developed; all were of unusual and interesting design, and extremely well finished. The Sèvres factory hoped in this manner to set themselves apart from their main rival, the Meissen factory in Saxony, which produced polychrome pieces. Within just a few years Sèvres had surpassed Meissen in many areas, due in large part to these pristine white bisque statuettes and groups, whose satiny surfaces, reminiscent of statuary marble, perfectly rendered the delicate detailing of the sculpted models.

Drawn from the satirical novel *Don Quixote de la Mancha* by Cervantes (1547-1616), this spectacular group is one of the Royal Manufactory’s most ambitious creations. It is inspired by a design by painter Charles-Antoine Coyppel that was intended for a tapestry. In 1771 Le Riche adapted it for the Sèvres Manufactory, for use in a porcelain *surtout de table*. Comprised of three groups, it was called “A Spanish *Surtout* relating the Story of Don Quixote”. The present group was one of the side pieces; the

two other groups represented “Don Quixote Fighting the Puppets” and “Don Quixote and the Enchanted Head”. Very few examples of this ensemble have survived to the present day; one bisque group representing “Don Quixote and the Enchanted Head” is preserved in the Sèvres Musée national de Céramique (Inv. MNC20546); a bisque porcelain group and the original terra cotta model of the present subject are also in the collection of the Sèvres Museum; these pieces are illustrated respectively in M. Brunet and T. Préaud, *Sèvres des origines à nos jours*, 1978, p. 230, fig. 316 and E. Bourgeois, *Le biscuit de Sèvres*, Paris, 1909, Tome II, plate 37.

**Artist description:**

Josse François Joseph Le Riche (1741- circa 1812)

A French sculptor of the 18th and early 19th centuries, he was the director of the sculpture studio at the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory from 1780 to 1801.