

La Pendulerie



Revel - Coteau

Rare Gilt Bronze, Enamel and White Carrara Marble Antique Skeleton Clock, Directory period

Circa: 1795

Joseph-Marie Revel (d. Paris 1811)

The Enamels Attributed to Joseph Coteau (1740-1801)

Paris, Directory period, circa 1795

Height 44.5 cm, width 27 cm, depth 10 cm

The main enamel ring dial reveals a portion of the finely cut wheel train. It indicates the Arabic numeral hours, the date, and the minutes graduation, by means of four hands, two of which are made of pierced gilt bronze and two of blued steel. The days of the week and their respective Zodiac signs are shown along its inner edge. A second dial, under the main dial, indicates the months of the year and their corresponding Zodiac signs by means of a blued steel Breguet hand. A third dial in the clock's upper portion displays the age and phases of the moon on an enamel disk decorated with a grisaille-painted moon against a starry blue sky. The main ring dial reveals the eight-day movement through its centre, with outer count wheel, two barrels, a pinwheel escapement, and knife-edge suspension. It strikes the hours and half hours on a bell. The pendulum features a magnificent Apollo mask with radiating sunrays.

The frame is painted on enamel on a dark blue ground, with gilt flower swags and four medallions. The

two oval medallions are painted with winged putti. The two others, featuring female figures, illustrate the theme of love. A central cartouche bears the clockmaker's signature: "Revel à Paris". The clock is elaborately decorated with finely chased gilt bronze mounts and is surmounted by a gilt bronze ribbon tied in a bow. The frame is adorned with scrolling, bead friezes, stylized rosettes, and female terms supporting baskets of flowers and leaves. The white marble quadrangular base is decorated with friezes, including a central one depicting putti among clouds, after the work of sculptor Clodion. The clock is raised on four knurled gilt bronze toupie feet.

HISTORICAL

Only a small number of comparable clocks are known. Among them, one skeleton clock, with enamels by Joseph Coteau, is today in the Paris Musée des Arts Décoratifs (illustrated in Tardy, *Les Plus Belles Pendules Françaises*, 1994, p. 206, pl. XLII). A second example, also signed "Ridel à Paris", with enamels by Joseph Coteau dated 1796 and a similar frieze after Clodion, is today in the Musée François Duesberg in Mons (see Pierre Kjellberg, *Encyclopédie de la Pendule Française du Moyen Age au XXe Siècle*, 1997, p. 319, pl. B). A third clock is shown in Johann Willsberger, *Clocks and Watches, 600 Years of the World's Most Beautiful Timepieces*, 1975. One further similar clock, whose dial is signed Laguesse à Liège and whose enamels by Joseph Coteau are dated 1796, in the Pavlovsk Palace in Saint Petersburg (E. Ducamp, *Pavlovsk, Les Collections*, 1993, p. 186, pl. 17).

Artist description:

"Revel à Paris"

Very little is known about this clockmaker, who was well known and respected throughout his career. Briefly mentioned in Tardy's *Dictionnaire des horlogers* with the first name of Joseph, he was in fact named Joseph-Marie and died in Paris in 1811. After having become master clockmaker, he opened a workshop in the Vieille rue du Temple, and is later recorded in the Palais Royal between 1787 and 1790, then in the Palais Egalité circa 1800, and lastly, in the Palais Tribunat between 1804 and 1806. Certain estate inventories from the early decades of the 19th century mention pieces made by him. In 1817 a clock made by Revel was listed in an inventory drawn up after the death of Adélaïde de Lespinasse-Langeac, the wife of the chevalier de Costalin; in 1821 a second one was recorded as having belonged to Anne-Charlotte-Dorothee, Countess de Médem and widow of the Duke de Courlande.