

# La Pendulerie



**Furet - Cressent**

**Exceptional Gilt Bronze Antique Wall Cartel with Bracket “Aurora or The Break of Day”, Louis XV period  
André Furet**

Case attributed to Charles Cressent

Paris, Louis XV period, circa 1740-1745

Height 92.5cm; width 36 cm; depth 22 cm

The round gilt copper dial, signed “André Furet à Paris”, features twelve enamelled cartouches for the Roman hours and the Arabic minutes and a central enamelled plaque; the pierced hands are made of gilt brass. The finely chased and gilt bronze rocaille case with bracket is adorned with scrolling foliage and flowers; the bracket features a Boulle-style satyr’s mask with feathered headdress. The cartel’s upper portion is decorated en suite, with asymmetrical shells, scrolls, branches, and palmettes. Beneath the dial an eagle or phoenix spreads its wings. The clock is surmounted by a lightly draped winged putto who lifts a fringed drapery to reveal a solar mask symbolising Aurora or the Break of Day.

## **HISTORICAL**

This magnificent and elaborate wall cartel may be attributed to Charles Cressent, one of the most important Parisian artisans of the early 18th Century. A bronze caster as well as a furniture maker, he

was one of the most influential artistic personalities of the Regency and Louis XV periods. Throughout his career his spectacular and often unique pieces were specially commissioned by contemporary connoisseurs who appreciated his keen aesthetic sense.

To date no other identical cartel has been identified, which suggests that the present piece was very likely created on special order. While its treatment is more strongly influenced by the rocaille style, it is reminiscent of a clock known as the "Mask of Boreas", made by Cressent circa 1730, which shows Boreas blowing on feathers. One such clock was delivered to the Dauphine's chambers in Versailles (see A. Pradère, Charles Cressent, sculpteur, ébéniste du Régent, Dijon, 2003, p. 296); another wall cartel by Cressent, surmounted by a similar winged child, is in the Condé Museum in the Château of Chantilly (illustrated in H. Ottomeyer and P. Pröschel, Vergoldete Bronzen, Die Bronzearbeiten des Spätbarock und Klassizismus, Munich, 1986, Band I, p. 78, fig.1.12.5).

### **Artist description:**

Charles Cressent (1685-1768)

One of the finest French ébénistes, Charles Cressent was also one of the first to use elaborate gilt bronze mounts of great sculptural quality on furniture with relatively simple wood veneers, during the Regency and Rococo period.

The son of the sculptor François Cressent and the grandson of a maître ébéniste and sculpteur, in 1714 Cressent was elected a member of the Académie de Saint-Luc. Soon afterward he began working for Joseph Poitou, ébéniste to the Duke d'Orléans; in 1719 he married Poitou's widow, subsequently inheriting the latter's business and his title of ébéniste to the Duke. After his father's death Cressent succeeded him as sculpteur du Roi to Louis XV. But his dual role as ébéniste and sculptor created difficulties with the guild of fondeurs and doreurs; Cressent contravened their regulations by making bronze mounts for his furniture and by supplying cases to bronziers.

Cressent's patrons included Louis XV, King John V of Portugal, the Elector Charles Albert of Bavaria, the duke de Richelieu, the Duke d'Orléans, Mme de Pompadour, and her brother the Marquis de Marigny.

Today Cressent's work is found in the world's greatest collections: the Wallace Collection and Waddesdon Manor in England, the Residenz Museum in Munich, the Musée du Louvre and the Bibliothèque National in Paris.