

La Pendulerie



Sèvres Royale de Porcelaine

A Rare Pair of Hard-Paste Porcelain Vases with Gilt Motifs on a White Ground “Vases Médicis troisième grandeur à têtes de Jupiter”, Second Republic period

Circa: 1848

Sèvres Porcelain Factory

After a Model by Architect Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart

A Rare Pair of Hard-Paste Porcelain Vases with Gilt Motifs on a White Ground

“Vases Médicis troisième grandeur à têtes de Jupiter”

Sèvres Porcelain Factory, Second Republic period, 1848

Height 42.2 cm; diameter 31 cm; bases 14.5 cm x 14.5 cm

Marks: S48 with a green border, for “Sèvres 1848”

The vases are in the “Médicis” shape, a classic shape inspired by the well-known Pentelic marble vase in the form of a bell, which belonged to the famous Medici family of Florence during the Renaissance. They are made of hard-paste Sèvres porcelain, with a white ground that is elegantly decorated with gilt foliate and arabesque motifs. The handles are mascarons in the form of Jupiter’s heads with ram’s horns that are surmounted by composite chapters with wide leaves. The necks are decorated with alternating friezes of finely traced leaves framed by two gilt bands; the lower portions of the bellies are adorned with arabesques, flowers, stylized palmettes and foliate scrolls; the lower portions of the stems are decorated with a stylized scrolling pattern and rosettes. These same motifs appear on the pedestals. The quadrangular bases are decorated with palmette spandrels.

The extremely elegant design of the present vases was one of the most popular - and most often produced - models in the history of the decorative arts in France and Europe. It was used in ornamental vases from the Italian Renaissance until the 19th century. Beginning in the final decades of the 18th century the Sèvres Porcelain Factory, at the time a royal manufacture, was directly inspired by the Medici model. After the advent of Napoleon and the Empire period, the manufacture - which had by then taken the name of imperial manufacture - began adding a particularly successful variation to the

Medicis vase. In 1806, the well-known architect Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart (1739-1813) designed a new type of vase for the manufactory, which featured the addition of Jupiter's head handles. The factory produced this magnificent model over the course of several decades. It was still being produced in 1848, the year the present model was created.

Today, only a few rare examples of this model are known. Among them, one vase was delivered in July 1811, for the decoration of the apartments of the Petit Trianon (see D. Ledoux-Lebard, *Le Petit Trianon, Le mobilier des inventaires de 1807, 1810 et 1839*, Paris, 1989, p. 98). A smaller pair was delivered to the Mobilier de la Couronne in 1818; it is today in the Château de Fontainebleau (illustrated in B. Chevallier, *Musée national du Château de Fontainebleau, Les Sèvres de Fontainebleau, porcelaines, terres vernissées, émaux, vitraux (pièces entrées de 1804 à 1904)*, RMN, Paris, 1996, p. 74, catalogue n° 46). A second pair is currently in a private collection (see the exhibition catalogue *Imperial & Royal, L'âge d'or de la porcelaine de Sèvres*, Galerie Aveline, Paris, 2016, p. 184, fig. 5). In 1810 one further pair was placed in the second salon of the Empress's apartments in the Château de Compiègne (illustrated in B. Ducrot, *Musée national du Château de Compiègne, Porcelaines et terres de Sèvres*, RMN, Paris, 1993, p. 85, catalogue 28).

Artist description:

La Manufacture Royale de Porcelaine de Sèvres

The Vincennes porcelain factory was created in 1740 under the patronage of Louis XV and the Marquise of Pompadour. It was created to rival with the Meissen porcelain factory, and became its principal European rival. In 1756 it was transferred to Sèvres, becoming the Royal Sèvres porcelain factory. Still active today, during the course of its existence it has had several periods of extraordinary creativity and has called on the finest French and European artisans. Kings and emperors considered it an exemplary showcase for French know-how. Most of the pieces created in the manufactory workshops were intended to be given as diplomatic gifts or to decorate the castles and royal palaces of the 18th and 19th centuries.