

La Pendulerie



Deverberie

Rare Chased, Patinated and Gilt Bronze Antique Mantel Clock, Directoire period

Circa: circa 1795-1800

Attributed to Jean-Simon Deverberie (1764 - 1824)

Paris, Directoire period, circa 1795-1800

Height 34 cm; width 45 cm; depth 12 cm

The enamel ring dial indicates the Roman numeral hours and the minute graduations by means of two blued steel hands. Revealing the skeleton movement, it forms the wheel of a small chariot driven by a young woman modelled in chased and gilt bronze. Dressed in an Empire-waist dress, her hair tied up in a bun, she holds a whip in one hand and in the other the reins of the spirited, patinated bronze horse that is harnessed to the chariot. Behind the young woman stands a young black boy with enamel eyes, wearing a feather headdress and loincloth. He adds an exotic touch to the composition. The moulded a rectangular base is adorned with foliate motifs, scrolls and palmettes; the four feet are decorated with foliate motifs.

HISTORICAL

In the late 18th century, the philosophical writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau extolled the virtues of a return to Nature via the myth of the “noble savage”. Due to their influence exoticism became fashionable in contemporary literature. Bernardin de Saint Pierre’s great success “Paul et Virginie”, published in 1788, Daniel Defoe’s famous “Robinson Crusoe”, Marmontel’s novel “Les Incas”, published during the American Revolutionary War, and Chateaubriand’s “Atala”, published in 1801, all profoundly changed Europeans’ view of other civilisations. This literary movement created a romantic vision of a sort of pagan Garden of Eden, renewed and regenerated by Christianity. As often happened in the French decorative arts, this was to have an effect on many artistic creations, particularly clocks and lighting instruments. This is the context within which the present clock was created by bronze caster Jean-Simon Deverberie in the late 18th century. It is particularly interesting because it is related to two types of clock, both extremely sought-after by knowledgeable horological collectors at the time; the “pendule au nègre” and the “pendule au char”.

Very few similar clocks are known; most date from a later period. One such example is illustrated in

Tardy, *La pendule française, du Louis XVI à nos jours*, Paris, 1975, p. 377; a second clock is in the François Duesberg Museum in Mons (see *Musée François Duesberg, Arts décoratifs 1775-1825*, Bruxelles, 2004, p. 54); a third example is in the collection of the Princes of Hessen in the Fasanerie Palace in Fulda (illustrated in the exhibition catalogue *Gehäuse der Zeit*, 2002, p. 93).

Artist description:

Jean-Simon Deverberie (1764-1824)

Was one of the most important Parisian bronziers of the late 18th century and the first two decades of the following century. Deverberie, who had married Marie-Louise Veron, appears to have made a nearly exclusive speciality of clocks, candlesticks and candelabra, adorned with exotic figures, and particularly Africans. He registered many “au nègre” clock models, especially the models known as “l’Afrique”, “l’Amérique” and “Indien et Indienne enlacés” (the drawings are preserved in the Cabinet des Estampes of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris). His workshop was located in the rue Barbette in 1800, in the rue du Temple in 1804, and in the rue des Fossés du Temple from 1812 to 1820.