

# *La Pendulerie*



**Daguerre**

## **A Rare White Marble and Gilt Bronze Cadrans Tournants Antique Mantel Clock, late Louis XVI period**

Circa: circa 1785

Almost Certainly Made under the Supervision of Dominique Daguerre

Paris, late Louis XVI period, circa 1785

Height 44 cm; width 28.5 cm; depth 17 cm

The two cadrans tournants, or revolving ring dials, indicate the Roman numeral hours and Arabic numeral minutes on rectangular white enamel cartouches. The unusual case, in the form of a cylindrical reliquary, is elaborately adorned with finely chased and gilt bronze. The clock is surmounted by a white marble dome that is adorned with beadwork, flower garlands, and an uppermost leafy bouquet. It is supported by pierced lyre-shaped elements that alternate with medallions of birds and flowers, with decorative laurel branches. The round base is adorned with leaf motifs. The pedestal, chased with wide acanthus leaves, is supported by a round white marble base that is embellished with ribbon-tied floral garlands. On either side, standing on the terrace, are two young winged Cupids that are wearing light draperies held in place by a strap around their chests; they appear to support the movement. The lobed white statuary Carrara marble plinth is elegantly adorned with beadwork and pierced friezes of leafy scrolls and stylized rosettes. The clock is raised upon four finely chased and fluted feet that enhance the elegance of the composition.

## HISTORICAL

The particularly elaborate design of the present clock was freely inspired by a slightly different composition that also features two identical figures of children. That second clock, which was quite successful, was very likely made by a Parisian bronzier such as François Rémond or Pierre-Philippe Thomire, under the supervision of Dominique Daguerre, the most important Parisian merchant of luxury objects of the time; he must have owned the model and therefore could have produced several variations of it. Similar clocks include an example whose dial is signed Guydamour, and which is now in the Frick Collection in New York (illustrated in H. Ottomeyer and P. Pröschel, *Vergoldete Bronzen*, Band I, Munich, 1986, p. 280, fig. 4.13.2). A second clock, perhaps the same as the preceding one, was formerly in the Russian Imperial Collection; it was sold at auction in Berlin in 1928 (Rudolph Lepke, November 6-7, 1928, lot 169).

A small number of clocks that are identical to the present one are known; they sometimes feature small variations in their ornamental motifs. One clock of this model was formerly in the collection of Madame Brach (see S. de Ricci, *Le style Louis XVI, Mobilier et décoration*, Paris, plate 163). A second example was included in the sale of the well-known Florence J. Gould collection (sold Sotheby's, Monaco, June 25-26, 1984, lot 626). A third example, bearing a cartouche with the signature of the clockmaker Lenepveu, is illustrated in P. Kjellberg, *Encyclopédie de la pendule française du Moyen Age à nos jours*, Paris, 1997, p. 295. One further such clock was in the collection of Annie Kane and is today in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Inv.26.260.37).

### Artist description:

Dominique Daguerre

Is the most important marchand-mercier – i.e. merchant of luxury objects – of the last quarter of the 18th century. Little is known about the early years of his career; he appears to have begun to exercise his profession around 1772, the year he went into partnership with Philippe-Simon Poirier (1720-1785), the famous marchand-mercier who began using porcelain plaques from the Manufacture royale de Sèvres to adorn pieces of furniture. When Poirier retired around 1777-1778, Daguerre took over the shop in the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, keeping the name “La Couronne d’Or”. He retained his predecessor’s clientele, and significantly increased the shop’s activity within just a few years. He played an important role in the renewal of the Parisian decorative arts, working with the finest cabinetmakers of the day, including Adam Weisweiler, Martin Carlin and Claude-Charles Saunier, cabinetmaker of the Garde-Meuble de la Couronne, Georges Jacob, the bronziers and chaser-gilders Pierre-Philippe Thomire and François Rémond, and the clockmaker Renacle-Nicolas Sotiau. A visionary merchant who brought the level of French luxury goods to its highest point, Daguerre settled in England in the early 1780’s, having gone into partnership with Martin-Eloi Lignereux, who remained in charge of the Paris shop. In London, where he enjoyed the patronage of the Prince Regent (the future King George IV), Daguerre actively participated in the furnishing and decoration of Carlton House and the Brighton Pavilion. Taking advantage of his extensive network of Parisian artisans, he imported most of the furniture, chairs, mantelpieces, bronze furnishings, and art objects from France, billing over 14500£, just for 1787.

Impressed by Daguerre’s talent, several British aristocrats, called on his services as well. Count Spencer engaged him for the decoration of Althorp, where Daguerre worked alongside architect Henry Holland (1745-1806). In Paris, Daguerre and his partner Lignereux continued to supply influential connoisseurs and to deliver magnificent pieces of furniture to the Garde-Meuble de la Couronne, which were placed in the apartments of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. Daguerre retired in 1793, no doubt deeply affected by the French Revolution and the loss of many of his most important clients.