

# ADRIAN ALAN

*Fine Art & Antiques*



**Attributed to FERDINAND BARBEDIENNE (1810 - 1892)**

## **A Pair of Napoleon III Gilt-Bronze and Patinated Bronze Athéniennes Modelled in the Classical Antique Style**

Circa: Circa 1870

89 x 41 x 43 cm (35 x 16 1/4 inches)

Patinated bronze

France

1870

The bronze impressed with the number R 2571 and R 2572.

A Fine Pair of Napoleon III Gilt-Bronze and Patinated Bronze Athéniennes Modelled in the Classical Antique Style, Attributed to *Barbedienne*.

This fine pair of bronze Athéniennes or jardinières are modelled in the classical antique style with tôle basins and gilt highlighted, foliate, vitruvian scroll borders. They are raised on triple female-mask monopodiae tripod supports, with berried bosses and united by gilt bronze rope-twist stretchers.

The athénienne was a completely new, multifunctional type of French Neoclassical furniture used as a jardinière, washstand, perfume burner or brazier. It derived from classical antique forms, such as the 'Isis Tripod' found at Temple of Isis in Pompeii in the 1760's, and from Olympic choragic tripod torches, such as the one that graced the Athenian monument to Dionysus, popularly known as the 'Lantern of Lysicrates'.

Once of the first recorded designs for an athénienne was by Jean-Henri Eberts, editor of '*Le Monument du Costume*', first advertised in *L'avantcoureur* in September 1773. An example was supplied to Madame du Barry (1743-1793) at Louveciennes in 1774 and an athénienne after the design by Eberts, now resides in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York [1993.355.1].

The exceptional quality of the bronzes on this pair of Atheniennes would suggest the work of one of the most eminent 'fondeurs' of the period.

### **Artist description:**

Ferdinand Barbedienne (1810-1892) was the inspiration and driving force behind one of the most important French art foundries. He pioneered the use of mounts and, more commonly, bronze sculpture including figures and animals. Barbedienne produced catalogues of bronze reproductions of Greek and Roman classical sculpture and experimented with champlevé and cloisonné enamels during the third quarter of the century. Barbedienne exhibited several pieces of furniture at the 1855 Paris Exhibition including an ormolu mounted oak dressing table and an ormolu mounted ebony veneered bookcase. Both pieces were executed in his favoured Renaissance revival style for furniture. Furniture with mounts signed by Barbedienne is extremely rare.

The Barbedienne foundry handled the casting of numerous national monuments and architectural schemes. Ferdinand Barbedienne himself also took an active part in the promotion of contemporary sculpture and became one of the founders for Davis d'Angers' medallions as well as much of Rude's sculpture.

His signature varied from hand written capitals to stamp in capitals, usually F. Barbedienne, Fondeur or BARBEDIENNE PARIS.

In 1839 Barbedienne collaborated with the inventor Achille Collas who had succeeded in enlarging and reducing works of art to arbitrary sizes by a simple mathematical calculation, allowing the accurate reduction of classical and contemporary marbles for the purpose of reproduction in bronze. In 1850 Barbedienne was commissioned to furnish the Paris town hall for which he was awarded with the 'medaille d' honneur' at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1855.

Barbedienne's awards:

Paris, 1878; 'Grand Prix', 'Grande Médaille d'Or', 'Diplôme d'honneur' , and 28 'Médailles de Coopérateurs'.

Vienna 1873; 2 'Diplômes d'Honneur', 'Médailles de Progrès', and 25 'Médailles de Coopérateurs'.

Paris 1867: 'Jure Rapporteur (Hors Concours)'.

London 1862; 3 Medals for Excellence.

Paris 1855; 'Grande Médaille d'Honneur'.

London 1851; 2 Council Medals.

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