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Fine Art & Antiques



Alexandre Falguière

A Patinated Bronze Figural Torchère Cast by Barbedienne

Circa: Circa 1880

Circa 1880

160 cm (63 inches)

Patinated bronze

France

Signed to the bronze base '*FALGUIERE*' and inscribed '*F. BARBEDIENNE. FONDEUR*'. With serial number WB 96762 .

A Patinated Bronze Figural Torchère Cast by Barbedienne, after the Model by Alexandre Falguière

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Barbedienne illustrates a drawing of this torchères on page 63 of his 1886 catalogue '*Bronzes D' Art*'. It is listed as '*Porte-Lumière, style Renaissance*' also indicating that it was modelled by Falguière; a companion piece also available modelled by Paul Dubois.

The original model of the present bronze was delivered by the artist to Ferdinand Barbedienne in 1867, and the two entered into a contract for the production rights. However it was not until 1876 that the Renaissance-revival figure was produced by the fondeur. Having previously contracted a very similar model by the artist Paul Dubois (1829-1905), Barbedienne decided to pair the two, adapting them into

torchères, and offering them in four different scaled versions. A successful model, the firm continued production of Deux femmes debout, style Renaissance until 1911 (see F. Rionnet, Les Bronzes Barbedienne: L'oeuvre d'une dynastie de fondeurs, Paris, 2016, p. 447). An example of the singular Falguière torchère is in the musée national du château de Compiègne.

Ferdinand Barbedienne

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 David 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, Fondateur' 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 médaille d'honneur at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1855.

French, Circa 1880.

Total Height: 212 cm

Height of Bronze Figure: 160 cm, Width 40 cm

Height of Pedestal: 52 cm, Diameter 37 cm

Artist description:

Alexandre Falguière studied under Jouffroy at L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts, exhibiting for the first time at the Salon in 1857. He won the Prix de Rome in 1859 and continued to find extraordinary success at the International Exhibitions of the period including the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1867 where he won a first class medal. He was awarded the Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur in 1870.

As well as private commissions he undertook a number of important commissions for the French state. In 1878 he was asked by the state to realise the Triomphe de la République, placed in 1881 at the summit of the Arc de Triomphe (taken down in 1886). His most important international work was the Lafayette monument in Washington D.C.