

ADRIAN ALAN

Fine Art & Antiques



Attributed to Farcot

A Large Patinated Eight-Day Swinging Mystery Clock

Circa: French, Circa 1890.

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127 x 0 cm (50 x 0 inches)

Bronze

A Large Patinated Eight-Day Swinging Mystery Clock.

Single train timepiece movement with Brocot escapement, initialled R and numbered 2712.

This large and imposing mystery clock standing at 127 cm (50 inches) high is modelled as a classical maiden in the manner of Albert Ernest Carrier-Belleuse. The figure holds aloft in her left arm a spherical clock case with the hours marked in Roman numerals, forming the upper section of a grid-iron pendulum terminating in a smaller orb. The pendulum swings gently with seemingly no means to maintain its momentum.

Below the upper ball is the pivot point for the swing. Three delicate suspension springs provide the breakpoint. Below this are three rods that connect to the smaller ball. When the clock is running, this entire grid iron pendulum moves from left to right.

French, Circa 1890.

Artist description:

Henry Eugène Adrien Farcot (1830-1896) was an established Parisian clock-maker working 1858 -

1890. It is recorded that he exhibited at Paris in 1861, London in 1862, Paris again in 1867, Philadelphia in 1876 and Paris for the last time in 1878.

A pioneering engineer in many fields, Farcot was the most renowned nineteenth century maker of conical pendulum and 'ingenious mystery' clocks, taking out successive patents throughout his long career. Farcot exhibited examples of this magnificent clock on his stands at the London Exhibition of 1862, the Paris Exposition of 1867 and 1878 and at the 1876 Philadelphia Exhibition.

The distinctive feature of the conical pendulum is that it is in constant motion as opposed to the conventional pendulum which is continuously stopping and starting. Often described as 'mystery clocks', they were not only novel in design but some of the most accurate time keepers of their period.

The first record of such a clock with a conical (rotating) pendulum is a turret clock by Jost Bodeker in 1587. Renewed interest in the nineteenth century saw a number of clockmakers designing small conical pendulum clocks, however it was Eugène Farcot who really developed the technology.

Notable examples of Farcots conical clocks are to be found in the collections of the National Watch and Clock Museum, Pennsylvania, USA, The Cliffe Castle Museum, Yorkshire, England and as the stunning centrepieces of the lobby of the Roosevelt Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New Orleans, USA, and the Dolder Grand Hotel, Zurich, Switzerland.

Although best known for his work on the conical pendulum, Farcot was a brilliant engineer in many other fields. Amongst other things he was a member of the Aerostatic and Meteorological Society of France, publishing important works on the construction of airships for both scientific research and for pleasure.