

ADRIAN ALAN

Fine Art & Antiques



After Clodion

A Fine Pair of Patinated Bronze Bacchanalian Vases

Circa: French, Circa 1890

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41 x 0 cm (16 1/4 x 0 inches)

Bronze

A Fine Pair of Patinated Bronze Bacchanalian Vases, After Clodion.

Cast after the design by Clodion, the vases are modelled with masks depicting chimerical ibex flanked by laurel swags, above a finely carved reliefs of young Bacchanals at play. Each vase is raised on a fluted circular base put down on a black marble octagonal socle.

The vases which display a classical iconography blending architectural elements of antiquity with the sensibility of the 'ancien régime' are after a model by the celebrated sculptor Claude Michael Clodion (1738-1814), made during his time at the French Academy in Rome from 1762 to 1771. One noted terracotta example, formerly in the collection of the princely Russian Dolgoroukov family, is now in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (H.CK-2093), exhibited at the Clodion exhibition, musée du Louvre in 1992. A related example in marble, notably in the treatment of the masks, is in the Wallace Collection, London (S32).

Clodion's design for this pair of vases may have been influenced by a chalk drawing for a vase by François Boucher from circa 1761-1762 in which we see Bacchanalian parades and acanthus detail that is similar to Clodion's vase designs. François Boucher (1703 - 1770) was the leading French artist working in the Rococo style and possibly the most celebrated artist of the eighteenth century, most known for his idyllic paintings on classical themes. It is possible that this drawing served as inspiration for Clodion when designing his vases, which were executed in various versions between 1763 and 1785 and continued to be adapted well into the nineteenth century by later artists.

A similar design of vase appears in several of Boucher's paintings, including *Earth: Vertumnus and Pomona* from 1749, now in the Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio (1980.027). Boucher had a strong impact on Clodion, who perhaps sculpted works after his drawings, supported by the fact that three paintings were included in Clodion's personal inventory upon his death in 1814, "trois tableaux de Boucher représentant jeux d'enfants, peints sur bois, prises ensemble 3 fr".

French, Circa 1890.

Literature:

"François Boucher's Designs for Vases and Mounts." Priore, Alicia. *Studies in the Decorative Arts*. Volume 3, No. 2 (Chicago, 1996). 2-51.

"Inventaire après décès de Clodion, April 13, 1814." Reproduced in *Archives de l'art français, recueil de documents inédits, nouvelle période*. Volume 6 (Paris, 1912). 231.

Artist description:

The son-in-law of sculptor Augustin Pajou, Clodion (Claude Michael), (1738-1814), trained in Paris in the workshops of his uncle and Jean-Baptiste Pigalle, the most successful sculptor of the time. After winning the Prix de Rome, he moved to Italy, sharing a studio with Jean-Antoine Houdon and studying antique, Renaissance, and Baroque sculpture.

In 1771 Clodion returned to Paris, where he continued to sculpt mostly in terracotta. Influenced by themes from pagan antiquity, he created light-hearted terracotta sculptures that epitomized the Rococo style. He worked on numerous public monuments in Paris later in his life, often in the neoclassical style and his work is represented in museums throughout the world.