

ADRIAN ALAN

Fine Art & Antiques



Attributed to Louis Constant Sevin & Ferdinand Barbedienne

A Large Napoleon III Gilt-Bronze and Champlévé Enamel Mounted, Marble Tazza or Centrepiece

Circa: French, Circa 1870

French, Circa 1870

38 x 60 x 35 cm (15 x 23 ⁵/₁₆ x 13 ³/₁₆ inches)

Champlévé Enamel

A Large Napoleon III Gilt-Bronze and Champlévé Enamel Mounted, Marble Tazza or Centrepiece,
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This impressive tazza or centrepiece has a shallow Belgian Black marble bowl enriched with a Champlévé enamel band of fruiting vines, the handles finely cast as scrolling vines surmounted by facing Leopards which assertively stalk the rim of the tazza; the bowl is raised on a vine cast spreading column flanked by hipped legs which terminate in hoof-feet, the whole raised on a shaped red marble plinth and circular cast feet.

French, Circa 1870.

Louis-Constant Sévin (1821-1888) was one of the most important French ornamental sculptors of the second half of the nineteenth century. He began his training at the early age of thirteen, when in 1834 he was apprenticed to the Parisian sculptor Antoine-André Marneuf. In 1839 he left Marneuf in order to join forces with the sculptors Phénix and Joyau, with whom he began designing objects for famous silversmiths including François-Désiré Froment-Meurice, Jean-Valentin Morel and Henri Duponchel.

He fled to London during the 1848 Revolution and there worked at Morel's recently opened studio on

New Burlington Street. Under Morel's auspices, Sévin designed many pieces that were presented at The Great Exhibition of 1851. Returning to France in 1851, he began designing porcelain models for the factories of Jouhanneaud and Dubois in Limoges, many of which featured at Paris's 1855 Exposition Universelle.

In 1855, Sévin took the position of 'sculpteur-ornementiste' with Ferdinand Barbedienne (1810-1892), who had established one of the most highly esteemed bronze casting foundries of the nineteenth century. Sévin was to spend the remaining twenty-three years of his life there providing plans and instruction to the company's craftsmen. Executing over two thousand designs in this time and often using novel techniques, his objects were some of the most stylistically diverse and innovative in the Barbedienne foundry and indeed in the wider production of decorative arts in France.

Sévin regularly received commissions from European nobility and royalty, and his pieces were frequently displayed at the Great International Exhibitions of the period. His most prestigious commissions include his work for the chapel and tomb of Prince Albert at Frogmore House in Windsor, his bronze work at the Hôtel de la Païva in Paris, and the candelabras designed for the Kremlin. He was to achieve great recognition in his own time and was awarded many medals for artistic excellence.

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, 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 '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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