

ADRIAN ALAN

Fine Art & Antiques



Manner of Claude Galle

A Fine Pair of Empire Gilt and Patinated Bronze Ewers

Circa: French, Circa 1820

A Fine Pair of Empire Gilt and Patinated Bronze Ewers in The Manner of Claude Galle.

Each ewer is of elongated baluster form mounted to the collar and to the base with stylised palmettes and stiff leaf decoration and centred to the body by a frieze of entwined serpents, the 'S'-shaped handle surmounted by a griffin's head and adorned to the lower part with a finely cast Satyr mask, the whole on a spreading circular foot raised on a square section green marble plinth.

This refined and sophisticated pair of Empire ewers are in the manner of those traditionally attributed to the famous bronzier of the Empire period, Claude Galle (1759-1815). A portrait by Henri-Francois Riesener, dating from 1812, represents the bronzier Ravrio seated at a table with ewer of comparable design, and which is today in the Louvre Museum and illustrated in H. Ottomeyer, P. Pröschel et al. "Vergoldete Bronzen", Munich, 1986, vol. II, p. 690, fig. 16.

French, Circa 1820.

Literature:

H. Ottomeyer, P. Pröschel et al. "*Vergoldete Bronzen*", Munich, 1986, vol. II, p. 690, fig. 16.

Artist description:

Claude Galle (1759-1815) was one of the foremost 'bronziers' and 'fondeur-ciseleurs' of the late Louis XVI and Empire periods. Born at Villepreux near Versailles he served his apprenticeship in Paris under the 'fondeur' Pierre Foy, and in 1784 married Foy's daughter. He became a 'maitre-fondeur' in 1786 and after the death of his father-in-law in 1788, Galle took over his workshop, employing approximately 400 craftsmen. Galle moved to Quai de la Monnaie (later Quai de l'Unité), and then in 1805 to 60 Rue

Vivienne.

He gained many commissions from the Garde-Meuble de la Couronne under Jean Hauré and is known to have collaborated with Pierre-Philippe Thomire, amongst others, and was responsible for many of the 'bronzes d'ameublement' supplied during the Empire to Château de Fontainebleau. Other commissions included works for the palaces of Saint-Cloud, the Trianons, the Tuileries, Compiègne, and Rambouillet. He also supplied several Italian palaces, such as Monte Cavallo, Rome and Stupinigi near Turin.

The quality of Galle's works was greatly admired and collected by aristocratic families across Europe including the Russian Imperial family; important examples of his work remain in many of the state palaces and museums in St. Petersburg today.

In part due to his lavish lifestyle and the failure of important clients, such as Prince Joseph Napoleon, to settle their accounts, Galle often found himself in debt and was finally forced to close his business, dying in poverty in 1815. After his death Galle's business was re-opened and prospered under his son Gérard-Jean Galle (1788-1846). Today his work may be found in many of the world's most important museums and collections.