

ADRIAN ALAN

Fine Art & Antiques



Robert-Joseph Auguste

A Pair of Louis XVI Style Gilt-Bronze Two-Branch Figural Wall Appliqués

Circa: French, Circa 1900

French, Circa 1900

33 x 26 x 11 cm (13 x 10 1/4 x 4 3/8 inches)

Gilt-Bronze

A Pair of Louis XVI Style Gilt-Bronze Two-Branch Figural Wall Appliqués After Robert-Joseph Auguste.

Each appliqué in chiselled and gilded bronze in the form of an upright female caryatid with up-scrolled, entwined acanthus leaves, to the lower section; the acanthus-sheathed arms issuing scrolling candle arms terminating in scalloped and gadrooned drip-pans with fluted cylindrical bobèche.

Elegant and sophisticated this fine pair of wall lights are designed in the neoclassical 'goût Grec' style promoted by the designs of Jean-François Forty in his book of drawings 'A l'Usage des Orfèvres et des Fondeurs', circa 1768.

The model is traditionally credited to the famous eighteenth-century 'maître-orfèvre' Robert-Joseph Auguste (1757-1801). This attribution relates to a model first recorded in 1776 in the sale of the collection of Blondel de Gagny, which lasted from 10-24 December 1766, where they were described as 'Une paire de bras à trois branches de bronze doré, très bien exécuté, & de la composition de M. Auguste; le corps de chaque bras représente un therme de femme'.

A related pair of eighteenth-century wall lights attributed to Auguste is in the Wrightsman Collection in New York and illustrated in F.J.B. Watson, "The Wrightsman Collection II, Furniture, Gilt Bronze and Mounted Porcelain, Carpets", New York, 1966, n. 231; another pair from the old Grandjean collection is

at the Musée des Art Décoratifs in Paris, illustrated in S. Faniel, "Le XVIIIe siècle français", Collection Connaissance des Arts, Hachette, 1956, p. 128, fig. B.

A popular model they were reproduced in the 19th century by a number the leading 'bronziers' of the period.

French, Circa 1900.

Literature:

'A l'Usage des Orfèvres et des Fondateurs' (cfr. Guilnard, 'Les Maîtres Ornemanistes', Vol. I, p. 240).

F.J.B. Watson, 'The Wrightsman Collection II, Furniture, Gilt Bronze and Mounted Porcelain, Carpets', New York, 1966, n. 231.

S. Faniel, 'Le XVIIIe siècle français', Collection Connaissance des Arts, Hachette, 1956, p. 128, fig. B.

Artist description:

Robert-Joseph Auguste (1723 – ca1805) was one of the most illustrious Parisian goldsmiths and sculptors of the 18th century.

Without a formal apprenticeship, Auguste worked with several different goldsmiths and was able to pursue his vocation by royal license, as an artist suivant le cour, entering his mark on 15 January 1757. In 1773 he became 'orfevre du Roi' and four years later bought the business of Jacques Rottiers moving to the latter's premises in the "Galeries du Louvres" in 1785 on Roettier's death.

He was one of the first Parisian goldsmiths to work in the Neoclassical style and received many important commissions from the French court including the crown used at Louis XVI's coronation. As well as undertaking commissions for the French court he supplied extensive silver services to other Royal households including George III of Great Britain, and Catherine II of Russia.

His renown throughout Europe was such that in 1776 an English silversmith described Auguste in a letter: "as I have not seen the best productions of Monsr Auguste I therefore presume I have seen nothing. His fame I am perswaded is founded on superior Merit because I have heard so many Noblemen of good Tast concur in ye same opinion of him...."

In addition to silver and gold, he created works cast in gilded-bronze, such as the mounts on a porphyry vase and cover in the Wallace Collection, London, and an influential pair of wall appliqués now in the Wrightsman Collection at the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

His son Henri Auguste assumed control of the family workshop in 1784–85.