Pierre-Jules Mène (1810-1879) - The racehorse



Old cast iron signed "P. J. MENE" on the terrace Richly nuanced Red-Brown patina - Very good condition

Dimensions : H. 15.7 in x W. 5.1 in x D. 11.8 in

Son of a copper lathe operator, Pierre-Jules Mène was born in Paris on March 25, 1810. He quickly helped his father in the workshop of chandeliers and torchlight making, so it was very young that he was introduced to metalworking.

Pierre-Jules Mène practiced drawing very early on, he had a particular interest in the very great horse painter Horace Vernet (1789-1863). In 1832, he married and left his father's company to make a living from his art: sculpture. In order to support himself, Mène created small models for porcelain manufacturers, which were very successful under the July Monarchy.

At the same time, Mène continued his artistic training with sculptor René Compaire. At the menagerie of the Jardin des Plantes, at the slaughterhouses of Montmartre and at the horse markets, he will study the anatomy of the animals, every detail, every muscle. Mène participated in many fairs from 1838 to 1879: the animal fashion inaugurated by Barye and Fratin allowed him to meet great success and his commercial success was immense. The sculptor obtained a 1st class medal at the 1852 and 1861 salons and a medal in 1855.

His animal subjects have been a great popular success and have been the subject of many editions. Exclusive publisher of his works, the perfection of his fonts is recognized and he is revealed, with Barye, as the one whose success has been most constant, and this over the longest period. While Barye could be described as the master of the wild animals, Mène is the greatest sculptor of horses, dogs and game.

Pierre-Jules Mène has adapted his work to his time, since at that time we are witnessing a renewal of

the hunting initiated by Prince Philippe d'Orléans as well as that of horse racing.

Our bronze: We rarely find this model whose exact number of prints is unknown; "The racehorse" represents a saddled stallion after the race, his neck tilted towards the ground. The animal seems to catch its breath after the test. We will notice the exact posture, the powerful musculature, and the care taken in every detail: braided mane, lightness of the reins that intersect, up to the veins of the breathless horse. The patina is superb, very nuanced from red brown to black, in very good condition.

Museums:

Compiègne (Château)

Fontainebleau (Château)

Nîmes

Paris (Les Arts Décoratifs ; Carnavalet ; Petit Palais).

Bibliography:

Pierre Kjellberg, Les Bronzes du XIXème siècle, Dictionnaire des sculpteurs, Les Editions de l'Amateur.
Poletti Michel, Richarme Alain, Pierre-Jules Mêne, 1810 - 1879 : catalogue raisonné, Paris, Univers du Bronze, 2008.