



Medicis vase in opaline and ormolu mounts inspired by La Fontaine fables

Era: 19th century.

Materials: crystal, gilt bronze.

Dim: H 7,7 in / Diam 4,5 in.

A very elegant amethyst Medicis vase. It consists of a gilded bronze pedestal base, adorned finely sculpted with foliage. The base supports the opaline which is decorated with banding, friezes of palmettes, a garland of blue flowers, and multicolored bouquets of roses. The vase is decorated with a medallion depicting an animal scene (The fox and the goat. Livre III. Fable V) whose subject is drawn from the Fables of La Fontaine. The decor is done in the same style as Jean-Baptiste Desvignes.

By 1820, technological discoveries brought new features to opaline objects. During this time, Jean-Baptiste Desvignes found a way to paint on opaline crystal and glass. He used only vegetable-based colors that he affixed to the opaline crystal. The tones, always matte, were limited to dark blue and red.

The gilding dominated, using forms of linear palmettes, flowers, and garland patterns. Desvignes decorated in Gothic style as well as created small, illustrative scenes inspired by the fables of La Fontaine, delicately colored in blue, soft green, ocher, purple, and gold or silver dots. The sets by Jean-Baptiste Desvignes ran from 1820 until approximately 1826. Afterward, his wife and his two collaborators, Vincent and Blancheron, continued using the same formulas and motifs to decorate opal that came primarily, it seems, from the Bercy crystal manufacturer, founded in 1827. Circa 1820-1830.

Condition report: good, light wear to the gilding.