



Peter Mühlbauer



Pair of Russian ormolu-mounted granite Vases

St. Petersburg, ca. 1780/85

cut and polished porphyritic Rapakiwi granite with ormolu-mounts

h: 49,5 cm

The precious granite reflects the enthusiasm for marble, porphyry, jasper and agate modeled on classical antiquity at the end of the 18th century.

Following a decree by Tsar Peter the Great, stone-cutting workshops were founded in Peterhof in 1721 and in Ekatarinenburg in 1726 under the imperial regime, specializing in cutting and polishing the exquisite stones.

The innovative character of the intertwined serpentine decoration has its origins in the series of designs by Ennemond Alexandre Petitot (d. 1801) published in 1764 and distributed throughout Europe.

Famous Russian architect and designer Andrei Voronikhin (1759 - 1814) also made use of this design and created several stone vases with intertwined snake handles for the Imperial workshops at the Tsar's court.

The imposing vases made of artfully crafted granite with masterfully chased and gilt mounts are examples of the creativity and skill of Russian bronziers in the "Russian State Bronze Workshop" at the end of the 18th century. Their synthesis of French Louis-seize designs together with the incredibly diverse resources of the Tsarist Empire in exotic stones resulted in a distinctly Russian aesthetic.