



Piat-Joseph Sauvage (1744 - 1818)

Empire Period Barometer-Thermometer

Circa: Début XIXème siècle

Signed Joseph Piat Sauvage and de Sormany

Early 19th century

Provenance: Hubert de Givenchy Collection; Galerie Moatti,

Paris, 1994.

Dimensions: H: 87 x W: 112 cm

The rectangular panel painted in trompe l'oeil and depicting allegories of the four seasons flanking a sheath topped by a globe flanked by two putti, the enamelled barometer dial signed Sormany Palais Egalité, the thermometer inscribed in the sheath signed Sormany Palais / Egalité n°260, signed SAUVAGE in the sheath plinth, inscribed on the reverse PANEaux. P. OF. 3 PES 4 PO SUR 2PES 3PO MALAINE RUE FABG MARTIN N.19 / A PARIS ; the frame decorated with stars and stylized palmettes, This very interesting barometer-thermometer is a collaborative work between Piat-Joseph Sauvage, painter and Sormany, optician.

Piat-Joseph Sauvage was born in Tournai, Belgium, and in the late 18th and early 19th centuries specialised in trompe-l'œil paintings, as seen here. A decorative painter, he took part in decorating the royal residences at the end of the reign of Louis XVI, such as Compiègne and Fontainebleau and Marie Antoinette's little hamlet at Versailles, before turning to painting on porcelain and marble. He then turned to painting on porcelain and marble, working for the Dihl and Guérhard manufactory and then for the Sèvres manufactory under the Empire, of which the secretary and pedestal table decorated with porcelain plaques, a piece of furniture acquired in Paris between 1805 and 1807 by Marie-Louise of Spain, and now in Madrid, Palacio de Oriente, are an example.

His compositions often depict friezes with putti, bacchanals, mythological or allegorical scenes. The iconography of the Seasons developed here naturally refers to the function of this object, barometer and thermometer.

Sormany was an optician by trade, based in the wooden gallery of the Palais Royal (Palais Égalité under the Revolution and the Empire), as the inscriptions on the barometer and thermometer indicate.

The old labels on this Sormany allow us to describe his business a little better: 'Palais Égalité n° 260 galerie de bois / N° 260 Sormany opticien successor to Catanyo sells all kinds of spectacles (spectacle and others) and everything relating to optics, mathematics, physics and other objects of curiosity, barometers, thermometers and liquor scales / All at fair prices in Paris'. He seems to be particularly renowned for his research into thermometers.