

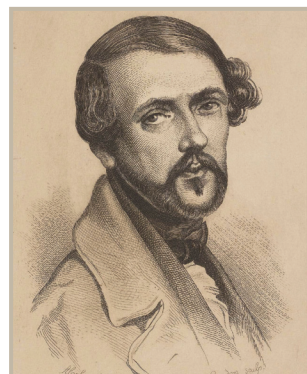
James PRADIER (1790-1852)

LÉDA ET LE CYGNE (1850-1851)

Also known as «Léda des artistes»
«Pradier» studio plaster (inserted metal seal), lifetime
production signed on the base «J.Pradier»
H : 67.5 cm, L : 35.5 cm, D : 32.5 cm
Circa 1850-1852

Provenance :
Former Pierre Louys Collection,
Belgian neo-greek Poet (1870-1925).

Only one example known for this model, this one in the catalogue
raisonné of the artist by J.Lapaire
(n°356, page 189).



Pradier, Froment-Meurice,
Léda et le cygne, Genève,
Musée National d'Art et
d'Histoire.

Emblematic subject of female nudity, Léda is a theme of elegance proposed to Pradier by the goldsmith Froment Meurice in 1850 for an ivory example on the occasion of the Universal Exhibition in London in 1851. Froment Meurice was then the great goldsmith of the Monarchie de Juillet, the one who executed the impressive *Console de toilette* for the Duchess of Parma. The choice of this figure is significant: the Léda of the artists is the one sublimated by the great iconic masters such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo.

For the ivory subject made in collaboration, Pradier plays on the chromatic contrast between the whiteness of the queen's body and the darker aspect of silver that embodies the feathers of the swan. The sculptor's notebooks show that he studied several postures for his composition, initially imagined more vertical. The sculptor finally chose to present his leaning figure in an attitude still repulsing the advances of the god. This visual effect also creates full and empty spaces that energize the whole as well as presenting the swan with open wings. The importance attached to jewelry is initially due to the addition of precious materials for the model in ivory, with gold and turquoise partures.

There are several size for this subject, the largest being that of 67 cm high which is both that of ivory and our plaster. Only one example in this plaster format is identified by us and by Claude Lapaire in his catalogue raisonné. It bears the metal seal indicating its origin from the artist's studio.



