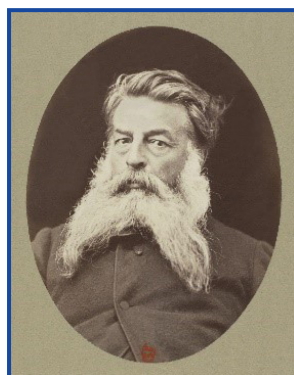## J.L Ernest MEISSONIER (1815-1891)

CHEVAL AU TROT

Bronze, *H: 39.4 cm, L : 6.3 cm, D : 20.5 cm*
Authentic example signed «Meissonier», edition by the artist's
children,
cast by «Siot-Decauville Fondeur Paris»
(seal), edition of few examples, this one numbered
«4» in a circle as usual.
Circa : 1900-1920

Museum reference: Fine Arts Museum, Bordeaux.

Painter of the Imperial epic, since he has followed the army of Napoleon III in Italy, Meissonier began, after 1860, small sculptures in wax or plastiline to help him for his painting compositions.
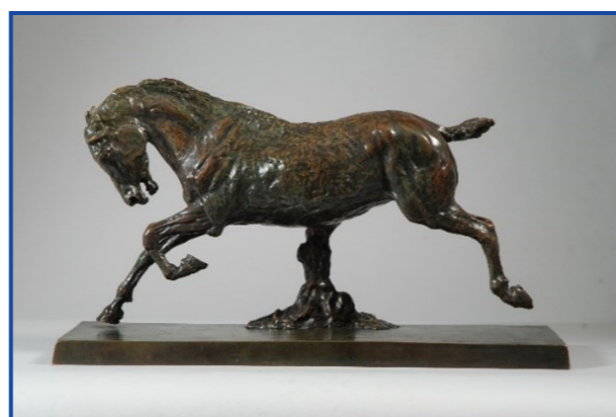
The *Cheval au trot*, with the *Cheval blessé* and the *Cheval au galop*, is one of the three main anatomical studies of this animal he had appreciated very much. The sculptor was so interested in the horse movement that he created a small iron railway in his garden to study it with precision. He seems quite satisfied with the result: « I achieved, with lots of work, to understand completely the tread, which is delicate and the trot which is easy. But for the gallop, I have tried hardly to look with attention, but I was never satisfied of my studies."
While paintings by Meissonier were often criticized by Modern artists, his sculptures – his wax sketches - which look like misleading first try, were very appreciated.

This enthusiastic approach was enhanced posthumously, because the models were known only by posthumous editions led by the family, widow, and children. This one belongs to the nine models edited by the children with the Siot-Decauville foundry at the end of the 19th century – with the *Cheval au galop*, not included in their catalogues.
It is important to consider the innovative aspect of these sketches' editions, which will become the strategy of the Hébrard Gallery at the beginning of the 20th century.

Siot-Decauville proposed perfect casts, a new kind of edition, with numbered and limited examples. For this model, only few examples are identified including the one at the Fine Arts Museum in Bordeaux which is numbered "1" and ours "4".

Cheval au galop