

JEAN-JACQUES FEUCHERE

MÉPHISTOPHÉLÈS or SATAN 1st version (1833)

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Bronze, red medal patina

H : 33,3 cm, L : 17,9 cm, D : 13,3 cm

Lifetime cast signed and dated in the model «J. Feuchère 1833», old edition chiselled by the studio.

Circa 1833-1840

Exhibition references of the model :

Salon in 1834 (plaster)

Salon in 1835 (bronze)

Expo. cent. de l'Art français (1900)

Salon de 1834 (plâtre), 1835 (bronze); Expo. cent. de l'Art français (1900)

Bronze à patine médaille rouge

H : 33,3 cm, L : 17,9 cm, P : 13,3 cm

Épreuve ancienne signée et datée dans le modèle «J. Feuchère 1833», édition ancienne, ciselure soignée probably par l'atelier.

Circa 1833-1840



Jean-Jacques Feuchère (1807-1852) is the son of Jean-François Feuchère, carver, from the dynasty of eponymous bronze founders (1785-1840). Bronze founder and sculptor, Jean-Jacques is also an ornemantalist of art object, designer one would say today. He made many projects of candelabra, cups, clocks and chimney fittings that are often on the spirit of those by Claude-Aimé Chenavard.

In sculpture, he carved the Passage du Pont d'Arcole in 1834 for the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile and modelled a Benvenuto Cellini sent to the Salon in 1835. He also created in 1838 the Agriculture and Industrie allegories for one of the fountains on the Place de la Concorde and in 1846, a Marie Stuart for the promenade des Reines in the Jardin du Luxembourg. The theme comes from the Faust, a play written by J.-W. Goethe (1749-1832) and published in two versions in 1808 and 1832. It is the Satan from the Salon in 1834, the great Romanticism Sculpture Salon, that really made Feuchère known. In the Sculpture History, this model has become "the" iconic representation of the subject and, to remind the Luc Benoist's famous quotation in his *La Sculpture romantique* (1928) about Jean-Bernard Duseigneur, "the masterpiece the sculptor did not know how to repeat."

The representation of Méphistophélès are often unconvincing in Art, particularly for painting and sculpture, because the commons attributes of the fallen angel – horns, wings, forked tail – can very quickly dissolve the substance of the theme into the anecdote, removing its credibility from the piece produced.

Feuchère had here the genius idea of draping Satan in the wings of defeat, wings in those shadow he seems to want to disappear. He gnaws his left hand in despair while the right holds the broken sword of the lost fight. Composition in ovoid, compact if ever there was one, fully consistent with the subject, the Satan by Feuchère is paradoxically easy to read and not hindered by the attributes mentioned above.

This model is particularly important in Art History due to its success. It has become an icon of the devil in sculpture. Its lineage and its descendants : it finds its origins in the Ignudi by Michel-Ange of the Last Judgment in the Sixtine Chapel and it influenced Carpeaux in 1857 for his representation of Count Ugolin in Ugolin et ses fils and finally Rodin for the Penseur of the Porte de l'Enfer in 1880.

Artist description:

