Table clock - baloon-shaped

Metalwork Collection

Accession Nr.:	53.2463.1
Artist/Maker:	Léchopié, Adam
Date of production:	late 18th century
Place of production:	Paris
Materials:	brass; gilt bronze
Dimensions:	height: 49,5 cm diameter: 30 x 27,5 cm

Tempus fugit – Time flies. The complex and synchronized movement of the cogwheels of the clockwork have been compared to the turning of time and life. This idea can be seen in the symbolic shape and the inscriptions of early clocks. As clocks became more and more precise timepieces, their symbolic nature lost its importance. This late 18th century clock with the depiction of a hot-air balloon refers to a specific historical event. 1783 was an important year in the European history of flight: the French brothers and papermakers Michael Joseph (1740–1810) and Etienne Jacques Montgolfier (1745–1799) had their first successful attempt at balloon flight after many experiments. Using their canvas and paper balloon, called „*Montgolfiere*", they managed to carry two people in the air for almost half an hour. In addition to experiments with hot air balloons, attempts were made to fly with hydrogenfilled balloons as well. The hydrogen balloon made by French physicist Jacques Alexandre Cesar Charles (1746–1823), the „*Charliere*", spent two hours in the air in the same year, also with two passengers in its car. These air trips greatly impressed contemporaries. Great crowds gathered to witness the successful attempts, and several depictions and prints recorded the great events. The Museum of Applied Arts, for example, preserves a painted porcelain dish depicting a balloon. The present clock, made by Parisian clockmaker Adam Lechopie (master since 1758) is also a so-called "balloon-clock" with a pendulum and with sumptuous decoration. The harmony of its white alabaster and ormolu ornaments make it a representative piece of the early neo-classical period, the period of Louis XVI (1774–1792).

Literature

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