



Pair of Chinese export porcelain Pistol Handled Urns

Jiaqing period circa 1800

English or American Market

Height: 16½ inches; 42cm

Priced in US dollars \$10,000

This item is located in the USA in the state of New Jersey. Shipping from there is at the buyer's expense.

A pair of pistol handled urns, modelled after a Marieberg type, with a central grisaille roundel, with flat topped covers decorated in gilt and on a square base.

This type of vase became very popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as part of the neo-classical style adopted by Robert Adam, inspired by the excavations at Pompeii. This is an elegant and restrained example of the type in good condition.

The urns are originally derived from classical funerary urns and this style was first revived in the late sixteenth century by Stefano della Bella (1610-1664) for Ferdinand de Medici in Florence. The Bella designs were published in England by Israel Sylvester and a later edition by Sayer was used by Wedgewood as a model for such urns. They were copied by Marieberg and Rörstrand in Sweden and also by other European factories such as Sèvres in France.

The Chinese export versions of the vases are found in an inventive array of styles, with handles of various forms, greek-key, pistol, flowers and the covers with knops of lotus bud, Chinese boys, the 'weeping widow', and very rare examples with high reticulated domes. All have the swags and the roundels (some with monogrammes) and the bases are mostly square and usually painted to resemble marble or porphyry, or black as in this pair.

References: Grandjean 1965, fig 128, cat 143, a single urn with Greek-key handles and a weeping widow finial; fig 126 a single with pistol handles; Howard & Ayers 1978, pp556-7, two urns; Howard 1994, p245, No 291, a pair of urns; Beurdeley 1962, p67 an urn of this shape but with the 'urn mystérieuse' design; p198, cat 206, a similar urn with simple gilding but different grisaille scene in the medallion; p165, Cat 70, a single vase, key handles; Antunes 2000, No 123, a pair of urns; Veiga 1989, p313, a pair; Wirgin 1998, p168, No 180, a pair of urns in blue enamels; Cohen & Cohen 2000, p38, No 28 a pair with monogramme of Gustav L Sifwertson; Cohen & Cohen 2004, p56, a pair of urns with floral handles and weeping widow finial; Cohen & Cohen 2008, p57, a pair with key handles.