



ROBERT WLÉRICK (1882-1944)

Homage to Baudelaire or Dédette Reclining, Small Version

Bronze proof with brown-black patina, #3/10

Sand cast by Alexis Rudier, 1941 (?)

Inscribed (on the side of the base): Alexis Rudier Fondateur Paris

Signed (on the flat of the base): R. Wlérick

H. 23, W. 46, D. 22 cm

Provenance

- Swedish private collection

Reported literature

- Kunstler, Charles, "Wlérick", *L'Amour de l'art (The Love of Art)*, October, 1928, p. 384-389.
- *La Bande à Schnegg*, Paris, musée Bourdelle, June-September, 1974, Paris, Musée Bourdelle, 1974, cat. N°174.
- Gilis, S.B., *Vie et œuvre du sculpteur Robert Wlérick (The Life and Work of the Sculptor Robert Wlérick)*, 1978, Maîtrise Bordeaux III.
- *Robert Wlérick (1882-1944)*, musée Despiau-Wlérick, Mont-de-Marsan, July 17-September 26, 1991.
- *Wlérick*, Saint-Tropez, musée de l'Annonciade, March 26-June 20, 1994.
- *Robert Wlérick, Actes du colloque de 1995 (Papers from the 1995 Conference)*, musées de Mont-de-Marsan.
- *Robert Wlérick, études, esquisses et dessins (Studies, Sketches, and Drawings)*, musée Despiau-Wlérick, Mont-de-Marsan, June 24-September 5, 1994, musée Bourdelle, Paris, February 1-May 14, 1995, musée Ste-

Croix, Poitiers, October 6-December 10, 1995, musée des Beaux-Arts de
Chambéry, February 1-April 30, 1996 (cat. n°20, proof n°2/10).

Exhibitions

- *Robert Wlérick*, Thurestams Konstsalong, Stockholm, 1948, cat. n°20 (this proof).
- *Robert Wlérick*, Institut Tessin, Paris, 1948-1949, cat. n°25.
- *1925, Mouvement des arts et des idées*, Palais Granvelle, Besançon, 1963, cat. 96.
- *Robert Wlérick*, Bruton Gallery, Bruton (Great Britain), 1976, cat. n°5, repr.
- *Robert Wlérick*, City Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham (Great Britain), 1976, cat. n°5, repr.
- *Robert Wlérick (1882-1944)*, musée Rodin, Paris, March 31-June 28, 1982, musée Despiau-Wlérick, Mont-de-Marsan, July 17-September 26, 1982, cat. 78, repr.

At the end of the 1930s, Wlérick started working with a new model, a young woman named Odette, known as Dédette. Wlérick drew her regularly and frequently between 1938 and 1941, as numerous drawings from this period attest,[\[1\]](#) and he immortalized her in three sculptures:

- *Dédette*[\[2\]](#) standing;
- *Homage to Baudelaire* or *Dédette Reclining, Small Version*, which is the one presented here;
- and *Homage to Baudelaire* or *Dédette Reclining, Large Version*,[\[3\]](#) which is an enlargement of the small version.

The *Homage to Baudelaire* is distinguished by its powerful sensuality. This is usually much more restrained in Wlérick's work, such as in *Meditation* (1930-1931) and *Rolande* (1937-1942), but in this work, the sensuality radiates outward, omnipresent, almost excessive, made so by Wlérick's rendering of the generous curves of his model. The title, *Homage to Baudelaire*, underscores this aspect: it is truly "luxury, peace, and pleasure" that are the focus here.

So apparently simple and natural, the sculpture nonetheless has a highly constructed composition. Wlérick chose a posture that has the model half-sitting and half-reclining, allowing him to create triangles in space, by bending the limbs, and gentle planes, such as those of the angled head and the front of the right thigh. This subtle use of geometry moves the gaze along the figure as the light glides across its surface.

A little before, Wlérick had sculpted *Pomone*,^[4] an official commission for the staircase of the Chaillot Palace in honor of the 1937 Universal Exhibition. The pose of that sculpture is very close to that of *Dédette Reclining*. While *Pomone* is distinguished by the distinct orthogonality of its composition and a certain rigidity that echoes the architecture around it, *Homage to Baudelaire* is engaging precisely because of its wonderful freedom and suppleness.

Homage to Baudelaire or *Dédette Reclining, Small Version* was editioned in bronze, with ten numbered proofs and two artist's proofs. Wlérick often numbered his editions in this way. Number 5/10 is in the Fine Arts Museum at Pau.^[5]

Homage to Baudelaire or *Dédette Reclining* is one of Wlérick's mature works, in which he expresses the daring of his vision and his mastery of the art. Wlérick not only excelled in this sitting figure; he also achieved the same level of perfection in a series of standing figures that he created during the second half of the 1930s. *Assia*, done in 1937 by his older colleague Charles Despiau (1874-1946), quickly became a celebrated work and no doubt incited Wlérick to explore the possibilities offered by standing figures. That same year, Wlérick did sketches for *Jenny* and *Rolande* (1937-1942) and the following year for *Young Girl, Figure for a Fountain "The Child with a Fish"* (1938-1941).^[6]

^[1] Examples include *Femme resort*, 1938-1941, sepia colored pencil on paper, H. 40 x W. 26.6 cm, Bordeaux, Fine Arts Museum N°INV: Bx 1966.12.16, and *Dédette assise penchée vers l'avant*, 1938-1941, red chalk on white paper, H. 25 x W. 38 cm, Mont-de-Marsan, musée Despiau-Wlérick, N°INV: MM 324.

^[2] Robert Wlérick, *Dédette*, 1939, bronze, cast by A. Valsuani, H. 18, W. 16, D. 10 cm, Bordeaux, Fine Arts Museum, N° Bx 1969.2.2

^[3] Robert Wlérick, *Homage to Baudelaire*, 1942-1943, bronze, H. 47, W. 95, D. 45 cm, Paris, Wlérick's studio, then through the family by inheritance.

^[4] Robert Wlérick, *Pomone*, stone, staircase of the Chaillot Palace.

^[5] Robert Wlérick, *Dédette*, 1939-1941, bronze, H. 22, W. 44, D. 19 cm, Pau, Musée des Beaux-Arts, N°INV : 78.2.1.

^[6] Robert Wlérick, *Jeune fille, figure pour une fontaine "L'enfant au poisson"* (*Young Girl, Figure for a Fountain "The Child with a Fish"*), 1938-1941, bronze, H. 137, W. 45, D. 42 cm, Paris, musée national d'art moderne - Centre

GALERIE MALAQUAIS
sculptures & dessins

Pompidou, on loan to the musée de l'Annonciade à Saint-Tropez since 1954,
N°INV : AM 733 S.