

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Pair of Saltcellars: Scenes from the Story of Orpheus

Suzanne de Court (French, act. ca. 1600)

Date late 16th or early 17th century

Medium Painted enamel on copper, partly gilded

Dimensions H.: 3 1/2 in. (8.9 cm), diam.: 3 9/16 in. (9 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1916.4.44

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 14, Enamels Room

Commentary This saltcellar and its pair, 1916.4.43, are marked with the initials SC for Suzanne de Court, the only known female enameler in sixteenth-century Limoges. The decoration is after woodcuts attributed to Bernard Salomon that were first published in Lyon in 1557 to illustrate Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. On one saltcellar, the furious women of Cicones attack Orpheus because he has decided to avoid mortal women after the loss of his beloved wife, Eurydice. But their spears are stopped by the magic of his music and fall harmlessly at his feet. The story continues on the second saltcellar, with Orpheus slain and his head thrown into the River Hebrus while three women mourn his death. In the final scene, Apollo turns the dragon that sought to devour Orpheus's head into stone. Saltcellars like these were likely not intended to hold salt but were instead displayed on tables and sideboards during banquets. Source: Vignon, Charlotte. *The Frick Collection Decorative Arts Handbook*. New York: The Frick Collection/Scala, 2015.

Collection History No. 1916.4.44 was recorded in 1898 in the Mannheim collection, Paris. Both saltcellars were acquired by J. Pierpont Morgan, London and New York. Duveen. Frick, 1916. Source: *Enamels, Rugs and Silver in The Frick Collection*. Volume VIII. New York: The Frick Collection, 1977.