

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821; First Consul 1799–1804; Emperor of France 1804–14/15)

Bertrand Andrieu (French, 1761–1822)

Date dated 1800

Medium Lead alloy, cast

Dimensions Diam.: 2 11/16 in. (6.83 cm)

Credit Line Dr. Stephen K. and Janie Woo Scher Collection

Accession Number SCHER.2014.15.472

Currently On View

Second Floor, Room 32, Medals Room

Commentary In 1799, after his successful coup d'état against the Directory, Napoleon became First Consul of France. Eager to legitimize his sweeping new powers with a grand military success, he crossed the Alps with his Reserve Army, hoping to take the Austrian forces in Italy by surprise. In May, Napoleon and his forty thousand men accomplished this by way of the Great St. Bernard Pass, a feat that became the stuff of legend almost immediately. This dramatization of the event, based on the painting by Jacques-Louis David (known in five versions), depicts Napoleon as godlike and substitutes a horse for the mule on which he had in fact made the journey. Source: Scher, Stephen K., et al. *The Scher Collection of Commemorative Medals*. New York and London, 2019.