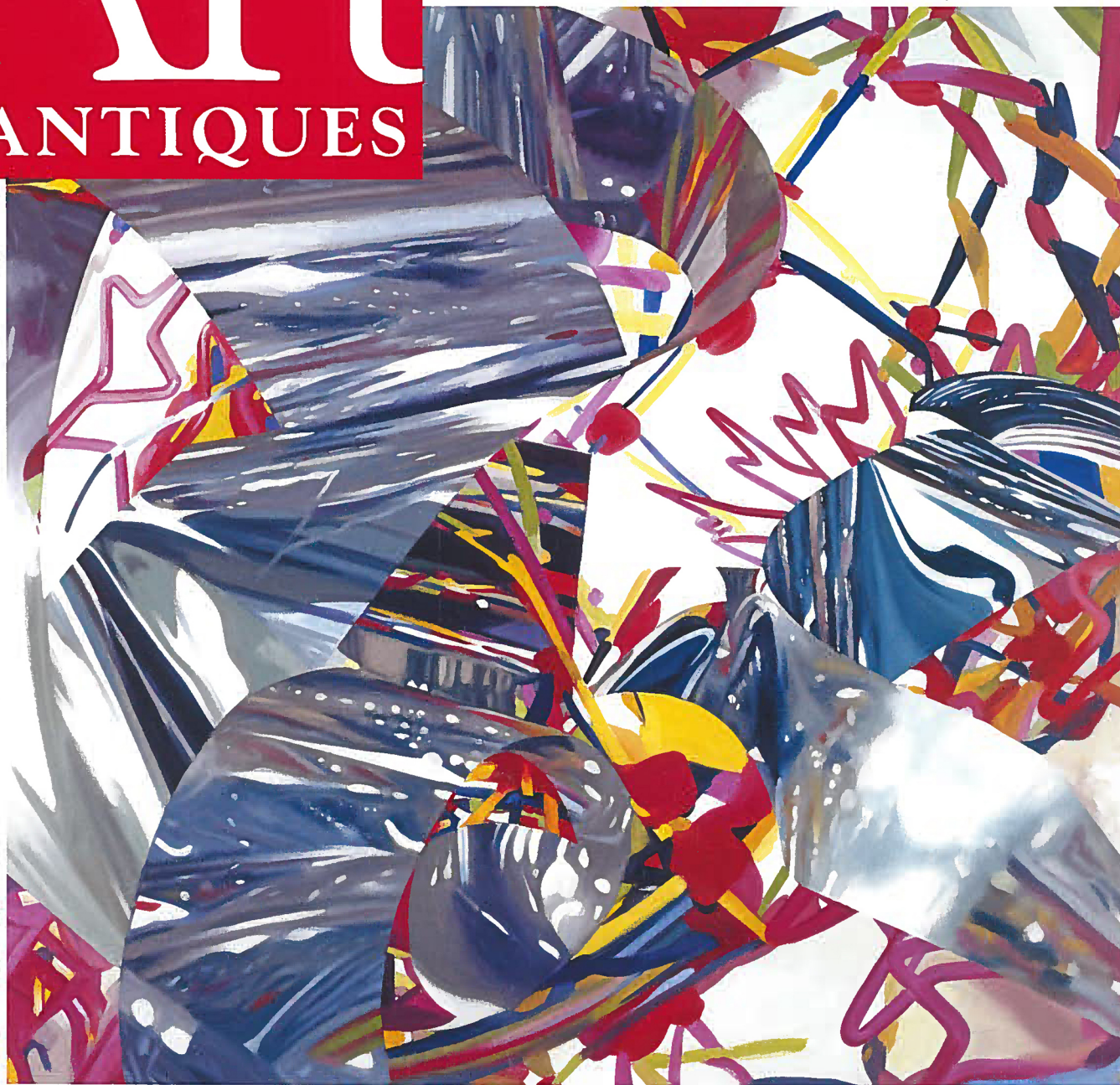


APRIL 2017

Art & ANTIQUES

FOR COLLECTORS OF THE FINE AND DECORATIVE ARTS



JAZZ AGE DESIGN | HENRI MATISSE | BOTTICELLI | TIFFANY GLASS

\$7.50US/CAN

04>



JAMES ROSENQUIST

Sacred Vessel

Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–79) is best known as an architect and architectural preservationist who championed the Gothic Revival in France and supervised reconstruction projects on medieval structures from the Cathedral of Nôtre-Dame in Paris to the entire walled city of Carcassonne in Provence. Criticized even in his own day as overly invasive, speculative, and historically inaccurate, Viollet-le-Duc was nonetheless an extremely influential figure. Like certain other 19th-century visionaries, he aspired to a “total art” driven by an idea that would pervade various media. After conserving and restoring churches,

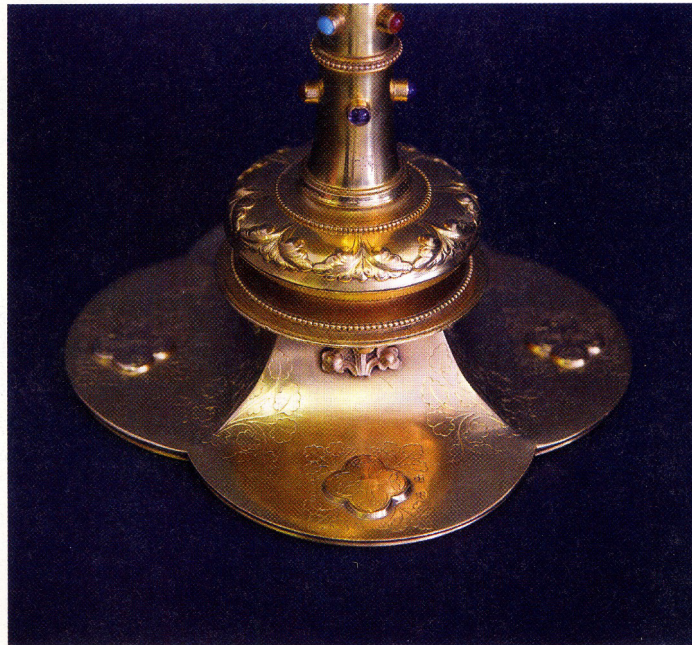
he wanted to fill them with religious objects that would harmonize with the overall design and, he hoped, give modern worshippers the same experience that their medieval counterparts would have had. This fed into a larger project of the Catholic Church at the time to recreate and replace liturgical objects that had been lost during the French Revolution.

Viollet-le-Duc’s fellow Gothic Revivalist Arthur Martin wrote, “Goldsmithing and architecture were intertwined in the Middle Ages; or rather they were the same art using different materials and processes to produce a similar impression.” To realize his most important designs for sacred objects, Viollet-le-Duc relied on the services of two goldsmiths, Louis Bachelet and Placide-Benoît-Marie Poussielgue-Rusand. The ciborium (or vessel for consecrated

hosts) shown here was done by Bachelet in 1852 from detailed drawings by Viollet-le-Duc. Made of vermeil (gilded silver) with a gilded bronze orb-shaped foot, it measures 13 ¼ inches in height and 7 ¼ inches in diameter at the base. The stem is mounted with semi-precious stones including jasper, chrysoprase, moonstone, agate, opal, garnet, citrine, amethyst, and turquoise; the total number, 12, signifies the 12 foundation stones of the Heavenly Jerusalem inscribed with the names of the apostles of the Lamb, mentioned in the Book of Revelation. The sides and foot of the cup portion are decorated with chased foliage, and

the cup itself is supported by a wreath of acanthus leaves.

This ciborium, which belongs to Viollet-le-Duc’s series of “ideal furniture,” was considered by the designer’s son to be among the most characteristic of his father’s style. It is being offered for sale by David and Constance Yates, New York dealers who specialize in cast medals from the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as a range of other art objects and drawings. Its provenance is from the heirs



of Bachelet, from whom it passed to Poussielgue-Rusand, the goldsmith, and eventually to a religious congregation in western France. While it is not likely to be used again for religious purposes, the ciborium is a powerful reminder of how during the 19th century the Middle Ages found their way into the modern imagination, where they have remained ever since.

