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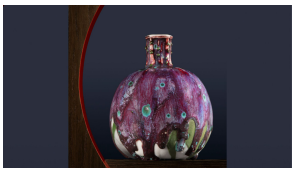

Vase en porcelaine de grand feu émaillée, circa 1902, H. 10,8 cm, Art Institute of Chicago. Photo ©Arnaud Carpentier-Didier Herman

Born in Albi in 1851, **Taxile Doat** (Taxile Maximin Doat) was one of the great ceramicists of the national manufactory at **Sèvres**, where he worked from 1877 to 1905. He was recognised there as the master of **pâte-sur-pâte**, a relief decoration built up from layers of liquid porcelain, and devoted himself to **grand feu firing**, in stoneware and porcelain. His gourd- and colocynth-inspired forms, his flambé glazes and his treatises made him an international reference. In 1909 he left to teach in the United States, at University City, near St Louis.

Training and early career

Taxile Doat was born in Albi (Tarn) in 1851. He trained in Limoges and Paris, notably with the sculptor Augustin-Alexandre Dumont, according to the Victoria and Albert Museum. He was at once sculptor, modeller and ceramicist.

Taxile Doat, plaque en porcelaine a decor en pate-sur-pate, 1900-1901 (V&A inv. 954-1901)

The Sèvres manufactory (1877-1905)

Doat entered the national manufactory at Sèvres in **1877**. He won a gold medal at the Exposition Universelle of **1889**, for which the Musée d'Orsay holds a porcelain plaque. He excelled at pâte-sur-pâte, a technique developed at Sèvres in the 1850s and of which he is regarded as the master; it consists in building the image from successive layers of liquid porcelain, a long and delicate task.

Doat was also interested in **grand feu**, high-temperature firing, in stoneware as in porcelain, sometimes combining the two. Around 1892 he installed a kiln at his home, and in 1898 a wood-fired kiln at the manufactory. From 1895 he also worked in a house in the rue Brancas in Sèvres, where he made studio pieces distinct from his production for the manufactory. At the 1900 Exposition Universelle he showed both classical works and asymmetric gourd-inspired forms. He helped introduce Art Nouveau at Sèvres.

The Musée d'Orsay holds by him an *Ornamental dish* of 1900, a *Colocynth vase with medallions* (1903), *Mother and Child* (1907) and a *Gourd vase with antique masks* (1907). The Victoria and Albert Museum owns a porcelain plate with a red flambé glaze and a pâte-sur-pâte medallion of Aphrodite and Eros, marked "T. Doat 1901 Sèvres".

Grand feu glazes and treatises

Doat reproduced the copper-red glazes of eighteenth-century Chinese porcelain, much sought after around 1900, and his skill in high-fire glazes helped Sèvres succeed in this period. He wrote several treatises on grand feu and on the French ceramic arts, including *Grand Feu Ceramics* (1905), which spread his discoveries abroad.

University City, St Louis (1909-1914)

In **1909** Doat was invited to the United States, to University City in Missouri, by the American potters Adelaide and Samuel Robineau, whom his writings had attracted. He taught at the Art Academy and Porcelain Works, alongside Frederick Hurten Rhead and Adelaide Alsop Robineau, and brought 172 of his works. The institution was founded by Edward Gardner Lewis, who went bankrupt in 1911; Doat continued production until 1914. The gourd-shaped vases of the University City Pottery, of 1912-1913, are held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The Saint Louis Art Museum owns 31 of his works.

Taxile Doat, "Mother and Child," 1907 (Musée d'Orsay).

Return to France

Doat returned to Sèvres in 1914 and continued to work in porcelain privately. The Musée d'Orsay holds by him a *Covered incense burner with bird decoration* of 1926. He died in 1938, or in 1939 according to some sources. An exhibition was devoted to him in 2014 at the Hetjens-Museum in Düsseldorf.

See also

Ernest Chaplet — Pierre-Adrien Dalpayrat — Edmond Lachenal — Art Nouveau — The 1900 Exposition Universelle

See our ceramics, faience and porcelain

Taxile Doat, University City Pottery vase, 1912-1913 (Met).

Marked "T. Doat Sevres" or "T. Doat 1901 Sevres".