

# Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



**Alexandre-Louis-Marie Charpentier (Paris 1856 - Neuilly-sur-Seine 1909)**

**Woman playing the double bass Woman playing the violin**

Bronze

Circa 1901

29.5 x 29 cm

Charpentier was a sculptor, medallist and cabinetmaker, a highly versatile artist who experimented with a wide range of materials, from the more traditional such as bronze, silver and terracotta to more unusual media such as leather and glass. He also explored new possibilities for surfaces of his sculptures, and employed the renowned ceramicist Emile Muller to endow his terracottas with rich, iridescent glazes.

In the 1890's Charpentier began incorporating metal plaquettes as decorative elements into furniture that he designed and built himself, and the present reliefs were for one such project. An amateur violinist, he often turned to musical subjects for his decorative compositions, and Woman playing the double bass and Woman playing the violin were designed for the panels for a large cabinet used to store musical instruments.

One such armoire, which incorporated a variation of these two panels is in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris, and dates from circa 1901. This cabinet houses a string quartet of instruments, and we can presume that the present reliefs were attached to a similar contraption.

Towards the end of the 19th century in Paris industrialisation had led to a profusion of machinemade

home furnishings, often poor imitations of objects once made by master craftsmen. Charpentier was part of a movement aimed towards restoring a higher level of craftsmanship as collaborations were made between decorative and fine artists. His low reliefs, which poetically capture a subtle trace of the raised surface are prime examples of this movement.