

JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEIM  
FINE ARTS

**ROMAN SCHOOL**

19th century

**NAPOLEON COMING OUT OF HIS TOMB**

Micro-mosaic

H. 0,64 m; W. 0,55 m

Signed and dated: *S.PC/DE ROSSI/ROMA/1869*

DATE: 1869

**RELATED WORK:**

Horace Vernet, *Napoléon sortant de son tombeau*, 1840, oil on canvas, current location unknown. The printmaker Jazet acquired the original painting on 25 May 1840, just before the National Assembly voted to ratify the royal decision to bring back Napoleon's remains. The painting was later in the prestigious Demidoff collection.

Around the return of Napoleon's remains in 1840, Horace Vernet delivered a painting to the printmaker Jean-Pierre Jazet (1788-1856) for engraving. It showed *Napoleon Coming out of his Tomb*, an allegory of the emperor which clearly reuses the iconography of Christ. The painting is no longer known today but the composition was very quickly circulated in various forms: snuffboxes, scarves... They show the fervour that accompanied the Return of the Remains, a fundamental moment in the development of Napoleon's legend, interpreted at the time as a resurrection of the Emperor and the prestige of the Empire.



Jean-Pierre-Marie Jazet after Horace Vernet, *Je désire que mes cendres reposent sur les bords de la Seine au milieu de ce peuple français que j'ai tant aimé* ([I desire that my remains rest on the banks of the Seine in the midst of the French people that I loved so much]), 1840, colour aquatint, H. 1,05 m ; L. 0,82 m, Rueil-Malmaison, Châteaux de Malmaison et Bois-Préau.

The term micro-mosaic refers to a mosaic of which the tiny elements of spun glass and fragments of coloured enamel (smalti filati) that comprise its decoration are very carefully

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assembled so as to make the joints almost invisible. Roman micro-mosaics are composed of regular forms, while in Venice a wide variety is used. After being assembled and glued, the pieces are waxed and polished. In Rome the *Studio Vaticano del Mosaico* was founded in 1727 and still operates today. The golden age of micro-mosaic was from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1820, in Rome there were over 20 workshops. One of the most illustrious of these was run by Giacomo Raffaelli (1753-1836).