

ADRIAN ALAN

Fine Art & Antiques



HENRY DASSON

A Very Rare Pair of Louis XVI Style Exhibition Bonheur Du Jours

Circa: Dated 1880

113 x 77 x 39 cm (44¹/₄ x 30³/₄ inches)

Lacquer Gilt-Bronze

France

1880

One cabinet signed 'Henry Dasson / 1880' to the gilt-bronze border. The carcass stamped twice 'HENRY DASSON/1880'.

A Very Rare Pair of Louis XVI Style Exhibition Gilt-Bronze Mounted Bonheur Du Jours With Lacquer Panels, by Henry Dasson.

These exceptional and very rare pair of cabinets each have brèche brocatelle violette d'Espagne marble tops and superb panels of hiramakie (low relief) and takamakie (high relief) Japanese Nashiji lacquer.

Dasson exhibited a related pair of bonheur du jours at L'Exposition internationale d'Amsterdam in 1883 and was awarded a diplome d'honneur for the superb quality of his craftsmanship. The bonheur du jours, which were mounted with 'old Japanese lacquer', are visible in a gravure in the *Revue des arts decoratifs*, showing the French pavilion.

Aventurine lacquer work or Nashi-ji is a form of Japanese maki-e that is frequently employed as a background to gold or black Japanned decorative elements. The technique so called as it resembles the sparkling quartz of true Aventurine is created by gold or silver flakes called nashiji-ko being sprinkled onto the surface of the object (excluding the design), on which lacquer has been applied. Lacquer is then applied and burnished so that the gold or silver can be seen through the lacquer. The name nashi-ji is thought to have originated from the resemblance that the lacquered surface bears to the skin of a Japanese pear, nashi.

Literature:

Mestdagh, Camille. *L'Ameublement d'Art Français*. pp 168-169.

Bourne, Jonathan et al (1989), *Lacquer: An International History and Collector's Guide*, Bracken Books, London.

Artist description:

Henry Dasson (1825-1896) was one of the finest makers of gilt-bronze mounted furniture in the nineteenth century. Unlike other cabinetmakers of this time Dasson started his career as a bronze sculptor, and for this reason one of the characteristics of his work is the great quality of his bronze and more precisely of the chiselling.

With a workshop established in Paris at 106 rue Vieille-du-Temple, he specialised predominantly in the production of Louis XIV, XV and XVI style furniture using the very finest gilt-bronze mounts.

In 1871, he purchased the flourishing business and remaining stock of Charles-Guillaume Winckelsen, who had established a reputation for furniture of the highest quality. Dasson almost certainly inherited the craft of ciseleur from Winckelsen.

At the 1878 and 1889 Paris Expositions Universelles Dasson exhibited a number of pieces in the Louis XV and XVI styles, as well as pieces of his own modified eighteenth-century design. The exhibits in 1878 included a table entirely in gilt-bronze, purchased by Lord Dudley. His copy of the celebrated Bureau du Roi sold at the same exhibition to Lady Ashburton.

Dasson ceased production in 1894, and at this time held a sale of his models, listed in 'Catalogues of drawings for art bronzes, style furniture and important decoration with rights of reproduction by Henry Dasson et Cie, manufacturer of art bronzes and cabinetmaker as a result of cessation of production.'

The records from this sale show that Paul Sormani, as well as Joseph Emmanuel Zweiner, Maison Millet and Beurdeley acquired certain drawings and models by Dasson.

Jonathan Meyer illustrates a number of exceptional items exhibited by Dasson in 1889 in his book on the Great Exhibitions.

Makers Bibliography:

Camille Mestdagh, Pierre Lécoules (2010) : *L'Ameublement d'art français : 1850-1900*, Editions de l'Amateur.

Ledoux-Lebard, Denise (1984), *Les Ebénistes du XIXème siècle*; pp. 146 - 151.

Meyer, Jonathan (2006), *Great Exhibitions - London, New York, Paris, Philadelphia, 1851-1900*, Antique Collectors' Club, Woodbridge; p. 269, pls. H7, H8, H10: p. 270, pl, H12, Editions de l'Amateur, (Paris), 2010.