

ADRIAN ALAN

Fine Art & Antiques



Attributed to François Linke (1855 - 1946)

A Fine Louis XVI Style Gilt-Bronze and Amboyna Centre Table

Circa: Circa 1910

80 x 0 cm (31 1/4 x 0 inches)

Amboyna Patinated bronze Gilt-Bronze

France

1910

Stamped 'Chaleyssin', for the Lyon firm of Maison Chaleyssin. The bronze stamped to the reverse '3756', 'GF'.

A Fine Louis XVI Style Gilt-Bronze and Amboyna Centre Table After the Model by Weisweiler for Fontainebleau, Firmly Attributed to François Linke.

This important table has a circular top, with radiating amboyna veneers framed by a gilt-bronze rim of stylised anthemion leaves above four scrolled supports with nymphs to the top, and raised on a concave-sided canted square base mounted with a gilt-bronze stiff leaf rim, and a central verde antico marble vase.

The original model for this table is attributed to the Eighteenth century Royal cabinet maker Adam Weisweiler and the bronzier Thomire. It was delivered by Rocheux to the Palace of Fontainebleau in 1810 - see J. P. Samoyault, 'Meubles entrés sous le Premier Empire', p. 248, no. 176.

This model of table was made during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by important makers such as Maison Millet, Joseph Emmanuel Zwiener and François Linke.

François Linke acquired a model of this gueridon at the sale of Millet's stock in 1905. Two years later

he produced his first version, listed in the Linke archives as Index no. 1390, complete with a porcelain vase imitating porphyry. The superbly modelled bronze caryatids to the tops of the scrolled decoration can be attributed to the sculptor Léon Messagé. Linke is recorded as supplying during this period furniture to the Parisian firm of Mercier Frères, Chaleyssin's partner in Paris. It is therefore highly likely that this table is an example made by Linke and retailed by Chaleyssin.

Other known works by François Linke have bronze mounts stamped with the foundry mark 'GF' including an example of the celebrated Louis XV Style Astronomical Regulator after Caffieri, which is stamped 'Vve Leloutre' and 'GF'. The widow Leloutre being responsible for the gilding.

Maison Chaleyssin was founded in Lyon in 1853 and specialised in the production of 'meubles de style'.

In 1896 the sons of the founder took over the family business, with Joseph Chaleyssin managing the day to day running of the company and Francisque Chaleyssin (1872-1951), acting as principal designer. The firm mainly produced furniture in the Louis XV and Louis XVI styles and of a quality that enabled them to act as a supplier to some of the important Parisian firms, such as Mercier Frères in Faubourg Saint Antoine.

The firms association with Mercier Frères continued to develop and by 1912 the two companies had merged. In 1913 the new house of 'Mercier and Chaleyssin' moved to a state of the art workshop at rue Boileau, in Lyon, designed by Francisque's friend, the French architect Tony Garnier. For the next decade they continued to produce furniture inspired by 'meuble ancien' in the English and Louis XVI styles, although quiet elements of modernity inspired by designers such as Paul Follot begin to inject itself into their production.

Following his brother's death in 1923, Francisque engaged his talented son-in-law André Ducaroy who transformed the output of the company with influential Art Deco designs. Spurred on by their success at the 1925 Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes the firm began to focus almost exclusively on luxurious Art Deco furniture and design. Such was the success of this joint venture that by 1930 La maison Mercier-Chaleyssin had opened a workshop at the French port of LeHavre in order to participate in furnishing some of the most luxurious ocean liners of the day including, ""Ile de France,"" ""De Grasse,"" le ""Normandie.""

The partnership between Chaleyssin and Mercier ended in 1934 with the two companies going their separate ways and the talented designer André Ducaroy left the firm in 1937.

Following Francisque's death in 1951 the company continued producing existing models, finally closing its doors in 1960.

Artist description:

François Linke (1855 - 1946) was the most important Parisian cabinet maker of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and possibly the most sought after cabinet maker of his period.

He was born in 1855 in the small village of Pankraz, in what is now the Czech Republic. Records show that Linke served an apprenticeship with the master cabinetmaker Neumann, then in 1875 at the age of 20 he arrived in Paris where he lived until he died in 1946.

It is known that the fledgling Linke workshops were active in Paris in the Faubourg St. Antoine as early as 1881, and during this time he supplied furniture for other more established makers such as Jansen and Krieger.

The quality of Linke's craftsmanship was unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries and reached its peak with his spectacular stand at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1900, where his Grand Bureau took the gold medal. He gambled his fortune and reputation on this stand, exhibiting several breathtaking items of furniture with sculptural mounts of the most exceptional quality and proportion. His gamble worked and his reputation was established to such an extent that Linke continued to be the pre-eminent furniture house in Paris until the Second World War.

As the Art Journal reported in 1900 on Linke's stand:

The work of M. Linke ... was an example of what can be done by seeking inspiration amongst the classic examples of Louis XV and XVI without in any great sense copying these great works. M. Linke's work was original in the true sense of the word, and as such commended itself to the intelligent seeker after the really artistic things of the Exhibition. Wonderful talent was employed in producing the magnificent pieces of furniture displayed....

The formation of Linke's distinctive style was made possible by his collaboration with the sculptor Léon Messagé.

Together Linke and Messagé designed furniture for Linke's 1900 exhibition stand, with exuberant allegorical figures cast in high relief, that exemplified Linke's ability to seamlessly merge the different mediums of wood carving, bronze and marquetry into a dynamic unified whole.

Today Linke is best known for the exceptionally high quality of his work, as well as his individualism and inventiveness. All of his work has the finest, most lavish mounts, very often applied to comparatively simple carcasses of quarter veneered kingwood or tulipwood. The technical brilliance of his work and the artistic change that it represented were never to be repeated.