

ADRIAN ALAN

Fine Art & Antiques



Joseph-Emmanuel Zwiener (1848 - 1895)

A Regence Style Gilt-Bronze Mounted Bureau Plat

Circa: Circa 1890

76 x 152 x 83 cm (29⁷/₁₆ x 59⁷/₁₆ inches)

Mahogany Gilt-Bronze

France

1890

Stamped to the reverse of the bronze mounts 'JZ'.

A Regence Style Gilt-Bronze Mounted Bureau Plat by Zwiener.

This fine bureau plat has a shaped leather inset top with gilt-bronze encadrement above three frieze drawers with foliate handles. The desk is raised on cabriole legs headed by finely cast figural espagnolettes and terminating in scrolled sabots.

Artist description:

Joseph-Emmanuel Zwiener (1848- 1895) was one of the leading furniture makers of the end of the nineteenth century. Of German extraction he established a very successful studio in Paris, producing the very finest furniture, often inspired by the public collections in France. He employed as his sculptor, Léon Messagé, the genius Parisian sculptor.

Zwiener's pieces were acquired by many of the leading collectors of the nineteenth century. In particular he supplied his interpretation of the famous Bureau de Roi to Ludwig II at Herrenchiemsee, which was placed in the King's study in 1884.

Zwiener exhibited at the 1889 Paris Exposition Universelle, where he was awarded a gold medal, for a stand which included an exceptional cabinet designed by Messagé (illustrated in Meyer, pl. H14). In 1898, Zwiener received an extensive Royal commission from the King of Prussia, and was recalled to Berlin as the King would not order furniture from overseas makers when furnishing his palaces, preferring to order work only from native Germans. The Berlin Sculptor Otto Rohloff, whose bronze work is very similar to that of Messagé, may well have been hired by Zwiener for this Royal commission.

In 1895 his Paris workshop was taken over by the important émigré and ébéniste, François Linke. Christopher Payne, in his book on Linke, speculates that Linke may have worked for Zwiener when he

first arrived in Paris in 1875. Linke is known to have also taken on Zwiener's sculptor Léon Messagé.

For this reason many of Zwiener's pieces have often been mistakenly attributed to Linke.

In order to differentiate between Messagé's commissions, the gilt bronze mounts were often marked to the reverse with the maker's initials. Several of Zwiener's mounts have been found to have a 'Z', 'Zw', a 'IZ', 'NZ', 'ZN' or a 'ZJ' on the reverse. This was primarily for the purpose of differentiation, rather than an artist's signature. Some of Zwiener's work was stamped but not exclusively, and only a few pieces have been found with a full signature and /or a date.

It can be speculated that Zwiener continued to work in Germany, after giving up his Paris workshop in 1895, as in 1900 he participated in the German section of the Paris Exhibition, where he exhibited the famous bedroom suite made for the Kaiser.

Makers Bibliography:

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Maze-Sencier, Les Livres des Collectionneurs, (Paris), 1885