

ADRIAN ALAN

Fine Art & Antiques



Marnyhac

A Napoleon III Gilt-Bronze and Algerian Onyx-Marble Centre Table

Circa: France, Circa 1865

French, Circa 1865

72 x 129 x 59 cm (28 ³/₄ x 50 ³/₄ x 23 ¹/₄ inches)

gilt-bronze and marble

Signed to the edge of the stretcher 'MAISON MARNYHAC 1. RUE DE LA PAIX PARIS'.

A Napoleon III Gilt-Bronze and Onyx Centre Table, By Maison Marnyhac, Paris.

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This opulent centre table has a beautifully patterned onyx top inset within stiff-leaf cast gilt-bronze border and guilloché patterned frieze. The legs modelled as female terms with arms crossed and holding atop their heads flower filled baskets. The lower part of the legs are formed as tapering pilasters joined by an elaborate loop stretcher with central platform.

France, Circa 1865

This table is exemplary of the finest luxury furniture made during the opulent Second Empire period. The use of Algerian onyx-marble is especially indicative of this period as it was not until the 1840s that the quarries near Constantine in Algeria, then under French rule, which had been abandoned since antiquity, were rediscovered. Alphonse Pallu et Cie presented the stone at the Exhibition of Algerian Products in Paris in 1860 and established the Compagnie des Marbres Onyx d'Algérie, supplying onyx to bronze makers such as Christofle, Barbedienne and Maison Marnyhac, who collaborated with sculptors such as Eugène Cornu, Charles Cordier and Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belluese to produce

architectural ornament and objets luxe. Noteworthy commissions for onyx marble were received for the Château de Ferrières, Hôtel de La Païva, and the staircase at the Garnier Opéra.

The caryatids figures heading the legs are inspired by a table, now in the Louvre, supplied in 1784 by Adam Weisweiler and the marchand-mercier, Dominique Daguerre, to the Garde-Meuble de la Couronne. Having been sold after the Revolution, the Weisweiler table was discovered in a shop on the Quai Voltaire in 1840 by the Prince de Beauvau (d. 1864). Purchased by the Empress Eugénie at auction the year after his death, it was placed in her salon bleu at the Tuileries, where she gave her audiences. Empress Eugénie's interest in Louis XVI and his Queen Marie-Antoinette, led to a revival during the mid-19th century for Louis XVI style furniture, such as tables like this in the goût Weisweiler.