

ADRIAN ALAN

Fine Art & Antiques



In the Manner Of Andre-Charles Boulle (1642 - 1742)

An Impressive Louis XVI style Gilt-Bronze Mounted Secrétaire à Abattant

Circa: French, Circa 1870.

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152 x 98 x 42 cm (59 ⁷/₁₆ x 38 ⁵/₁₆ x 16 ¹/₁₆ inches)

gilt-bronze & mahogany

An Impressive Louis XVI style Gilt-Bronze Mounted Mahogany and Bois Satiné Secrétaire à Abattant, In The Manner Of André Charles Boulle.

This drop-front writing cabinet or secrétaire à abattant is finished in beautiful veneers with radiating figured panels. The inset pink veined marble top is surrounded by a gilt-bronze spreading pediment cast with flowers and husk-chains. The fall-front is lavishly mounted with a gilt-bronze urn issuing foliate swags. The top angles cornered by pierced clasps which are characteristic of Boulle's oeuvre. The inside of the fall-front door is covered with a leather writing surface and encloses a citronnier interior fitted with an arrangement of six drawers and five cubby-holds. The cupboard base with shelved interior.

French, Circa 1870.

This impressive secrétaire à abattant perfectly encapsulates the golden age of French furniture making.

It dates to the 19th century, the 1870s, but is designed in the Louis XVI style of the 1770s and in its details shows the stylistic influence of André-Charles Boulle who worked as furniture maker to Louis XIV in the 1670s. Boulle's importance was such that his designs informed French furniture making for two hundred years. In the eighteenth century ébénistes such as Étienne Levasseur and Claude Montigny created new designs inspired by, and sometimes directly copying, Boulle, as well as restoring and adapting earlier pieces from Boulle's workshop. For example the antecedent for the present secrétaire is a Louis XVI example by Montigny illustrated in Pierre Kjellberg, *Le Mobilier Français du XVIIIe Siècle*, Les Éditions de L'Amateur, Paris, 1989, p. 591.

Artist description:

André-Charles Boulle (d.1732), appointed 'Ebéniste, Ciseleur, Doreur et Sculpteur du Roi' in 1672, is among the greatest ébénistes of all time. His fame was such that his name has become synonymous with a whole generic furniture type.

In the first decades of the eighteenth century, while still exploiting the common practice of contrasting black ebony against the gold of gilded bronze and brass, silver-toned pewter and often red-coloured tortoiseshell in marquetry, Boulle introduced light, playful designs enlivened with small-scale, lacy designs of playful singeries, garlands of flowers and airy architectural fantasies. First popularised as a technique in his work for the French Court during the reign of Louis XIV, the style has since been associated with the most opulent and expensive designs.