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Jean-françois Leleu A Louis XVI Mahogany Commode Stamped Jean-françois Leleu And George Kintz



28 000 EUR

Signature : Jean-François Leleu maître à Paris le 19  
septembre 1764

Period : 18th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Mahogany

Length : 130.02 cm / 51,1811024 pouce.

Height : 89.3cm / 35,03937 pouce.

Depth : 64.02cm / 25,19685pouce

#### Description

Rare Louis XVI period Cuban speckled mahogany chest of drawers, stamped Jean-François Leleu and George Kintz, circa 1780. Of quadrangular rectangular form with a tripartite front and central projection, it opens with three superimposed long drawers, two of which are wider with concealed crosspieces. The rounded, fluted uprights with internal recesses, set back from the profile of the front and sides, rest on tapered legs with flattened ball-shoe shoes. The overall design is underlined by sharp-edged moldings, giving this chest of drawers its distinctive personality. The whole piece is topped with a violet breche, the molded contours of which follow those of the tripartite front. This commode is typical of Jean-François Leleu's work of the 1780s. Jean-François Leleu's

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genius for proportion and line is probably most evident in his mahogany work. He was an early adopter of mahogany, the fashion for which was launched in the 1760s, notably by Madame Pompadour, who at the time of her death in 1764 owned seventeen mahogany chests of drawers, and spread throughout the 1770s.

The double stamp on this commode suggests collaboration. Jean-François Leleu, whose workshop was flourishing, often called on some of his colleagues to assist him, among them Georges KINTZ, received master in 1776. These two stamps are stamped together, on the left rear uprights J.F.LELEU and on the right rear upright G.KINTZ.

Dimensions Height 89.3cm / 35,03937 pouce.-  
Width 130.02 / 51,1811024 pouce. - Depth  
64.02cm / 25,19685pouce.

Three models similar to our commode were sold by Sotheby's in Paris on November 19, 2020, by Christie's lot 26, in Monaco on June 17, 2000, lot 55, and in Paris on June 23, 2005, lot 392.

Jean-François Leleu received his master's degree on September 19, 1764.

Jean-François Leleu was an excellent cabinetmaker who apprenticed in the prestigious workshop of Jean-François Oeben, cabinetmaker to the King. On the death of this master in January 1763, Leleu thought that the widow Oeben would entrust him with the management of the workshop, but he was supplanted by his comrade Riesener, a fact which infuriated him. On September 19, 1764, he took out a master's degree and set up store on Chaussée de la Contrescarpe, then rue Royale. Jean-François Leleu was to become one of Mme du Barry's and the Court's main suppliers.

In just a few years, he had established himself in the eyes of connoisseurs through the sophisticated elegance of his work. Towards the end of the reign of Louis XV, he supplied the Court with several works owned by the Mobilier National. At the same time, he produced sumptuous pieces for Mme du Barry, such as a desk adorned with

painted porcelain, which, after emigrating to Florence, in the San-Donato palace, is today one of the jewels in Lady Carnarvon's collection in London. Leleu also supplied the Prince de Condé. Between 1772 and 1777, he sent furniture worth over 60,000 livres to the Palais-Bourbon and the Hôtel de Lassay. Over the next ten years, he continued to receive orders for the châteaux of Chantilly, Saint-Maur and Villegénis, as well as for Princess Louise's hotel on rue Monsieur.

The Musée Condé archives preserve several memoirs by the cabinetmaker, in which he gives a detailed description of the works he created for these residences. Among the most precious were a cylinder desk decorated with twelve lion heads and a large chest of drawers featuring fleur-de-lys mosaics with the prince's cipher inlaid on a blue background. In addition to such pieces, he made a wide range of furniture for the Château de Marais, near Dourdan, including walnut pieces and a superb polychrome lacquer chest of drawers, some of which the Marquis de Noailles owned at Champlâtreux.

Similarly, Leleu undertook the furnishing of the Château d'Hénonville in Beauvoisis: in the homes of Baroness d'Ivry, Countess Henri de Gontaut-Biron, Marquise de Courcy, née de Nantois, and Count de La Panouse, were scattered works delivered by the master for this residence. His talents were also employed by the Marquis de Laborde at the Château de Méréville. A large arched chest of drawers, which adorns Marie-Antoinette's bedroom at the Petit-Trianon, and two small pieces of furniture, one with a door, the other with drawers, which were placed in the dining room of the same palace, belong to this genre. One of the latter pieces is remarkable for the diamond pattern on its front. A replica of this piece from Mme du Barry's furniture was in the Luce collection at Versailles. An attractive commode by Leleu, also in veneered wood, was acquired by Mme la Comtesse de Béarn at the Jacques Doucet sale. Marquetry furniture signed by this artist is not rare. Suffice it to mention a

curious secretary, adorned with octagonal tiling, belonging to Count Moïse de Camondo, a fine piece of in-between furniture owned by Countess H. de Gontaut, and above all the admirable secretary in the Wallace collection in London, richly decorated with vases and flower baskets. Another masterpiece can be found in the galleries of Hertford House.

This piece of furniture is made of light mahogany of a very soft tone. Its firm yet supple lines, the robust elegance of its six fluted legs surmounted by scrolled capitals, the finesse of its ornaments and the ingenious taste with which they are distributed, all contribute to the beauty of this piece, one of the most perfect to come out of Leleu's hands. The fleur-de-lys in the frieze suggest that it was commissioned by the Prince de Condé. The Schlichting donation to the Musée du Louvre includes a similar chest of drawers, but with detached columns at the corners and twisted legs trimmed with pearls.

The Château de Chantilly, which was devastated during the French Revolution, no longer contains any of the furniture the artist used to embellish this residence. He is nevertheless represented there by an extraordinary work acquired by the Duc d'Aumale at Lord Hamilton's sale.

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