



Neo-greek Cigar Cellarette, C.-g. Diehl ; E. Frémiet ; J. Brandely, France, Circa 1867



22 500 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Solid wood

Width : 55

Height : 124

Depth : 42

Description

Rare humidor made in cedar, with a front flap, discovering five sliding cane trays. Beautiful bronze and silver electroplated brass ornaments, such as the central niche decorated with a winged creature, surmounted on top of the cabinet with a feline. Resting on four tall legs joined by a stretcher decorated with a silvered pierced bronze incense burner. Related work : The central relief of that cellarette for cigars, with that fantasy creature, is directly inspired from the one designed by J. Brandely for the front door of the Merovingian Cabinet made by Diehl in 1867, and now preserved at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Inv. 1989.197). Biography : Arriving in Paris in about 1840 Charles-Guillaume Diehl (1811-1885) founded his cabinet making and decoration firm at 19 rue

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Michel-le-Comte in 1885. His workshops produced elegant little pieces of furniture in rosewood and thuja and novelties with bronze and porcelain embellishments (see « Les ébénistes du XIXème siècle », D. Ledoux-Lebard, Ed. de l'amateur, 1982, p.164). It was his luxury boxes, however (liqueur cellarettes, cigar cabinets, games boxes, cashmere cases, jewelry cases) which assured Diehl's renown (see « l'Art en France sous le Second Empire », Exposition Grand-Palais, Paris, 1979, p.133). Already rewarded with a bronze medal at the Universal Exhibition of 1855 in Paris, he exhibited a jardinière with china columns and a liqueur cabinet at the Industrial Arts Exhibition in 1861. In collaboration with the designer Jean Brandely (active between 1867 and 1873), Diehl renovated his decorative repertory and created astonishing pieces of furniture in the Grecian style which had a dazzling success at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1867, where his cabinets also won a silver medal. Certain motifs were so typical of Diehl's work that they received extensive commentary by the art critic J. Mesnard in his book « Les Merveilles de l'Exposition Universal de 1867 » (vol. II, pp. 133 & 149). He writes of a table of which « the pendant bearing hooks and the fan shaped radiating motif which ornaments the entablature are engraved with love » (p. 133) and a jewelry case where « The head in fine Grecian style makes up the essential part of the fine gilt bronze ornamentation » (p. 149). For this Universal Exhibition of 1867, Diehl also formed a partnership with two famous sculptors : Emile Guillemin (1841-1907) who carved the relief for a mahogany sideboard with galvanic gilt bronzes (Orsay Museum, Paris, Inv. O.A.O. 992) and Emmanuel Frémiet (1824-1910) who executed the low relief for a cedar medal cabinet with marquetry and silver plated bronzes (Orsay Museum, Paris, Inv. O.A. 10440). Diehl was again rewarded with a medal of honor at the Union Central Exhibition of 1869 and a progress medal at the Universal Exhibition in Vienna in

1873 (Sideboard in blackened pear wood and lemon wood with galvanic bronzes, designed by J. Brandely with a low relief by E. Guillemin, Orsay Museum, Paris, Inv. O.A.O. 336).

Showered with praise by the critics, Diehl is considered as one of the most innovating artists of the 19th Century. His final appearance was at the 1878 Universal Exhibition in Paris where he presented outside the competition, his most recent creations, including a work table in marquetry which with its naturalistic grasshopper motif anticipated « Art Nouveau » (Musée de l'Ecole de Nancy, Nancy).