



Japanese Style Cabinet-secretary Attr. To Perret And Vibert, France, Circa 1880



3 800 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Solid wood

Width : 65

Height : 167

Depth : 32

Description

A Japanese style carved wood cabinet, with a painted decor imitating Japanese lacquer, ornamented with flowers, birds and butterflies. Opening onto two drawers and a paper filer, the upright-secretary door is also fitted with red velvet. Surmounted by a drawer and asymmetrical shelves, composed in the Japanese « zen » spirit, the cabinet stands on four legs joined by an engraved stretcher.

The great influence of the Far-East, through China and Japan, in the second half of the 19th century French art could be found first in painting and soon after in decorative arts and furniture as well.

Following the Franco-English military campaign led in 1860 against the Imperial army in China,

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Tel : 0142868999

Mobile : 0609471374

14 avenue Matignon

Paris 75008

the French troops of Napoleon III brought back from the Summer Palace, a part of the Chinese Imperial court treasure, which will make up the famous Chinese Museum of Empress Eugénie at the Fontainebleau Palace. The French artists won't be long to take inspiration from those exotic and sumptuous objects for their creations, as they used to do in the 18th century, when the best French cabinet-makers adapted the Chinese lacquers on the luxurious royal chests.

But the influence of Japan, at the Meiji period (1868-1912), came also very quickly to France, thanks to the opening of the country in the middle of the 19th century, as well as the development of traveling and the amazing Universal Exhibitions, in which Japan participated for the first time in 1867 in Paris. Then many Japanese objects and prints were imported to France and to all Europe, and for which some collectors spent already fortunes.

With Manet and Impressionists generation, the passion for Japanese art, more than a simple taste for an exotic style, was still in fashion until the turn of the 19th century. It provoked not only a craze among the French aristocratic families as well as the wealthy Paris high society, wishing renew their mansion inner decoration, but turned also to a real revolutionary movement among the "avant-garde" artists. Those artists, whoever they were, painters, cabinet-makers or designers of ceramic, bronze and crystal objects, adapted then those techniques and naturalistic motifs unknown until this time.

Christofle, very famous since 1867 as a silversmith, was also one of the leaders among the inventors of Japanism. He knew how to use Japanese elements to his own splendid works made in silver or "cloisonné" enameled bronze. During the 1878 Paris Universal Exhibition, Christofle presented with great success his life-sized bronze Japanese ladies torchères, executed by the renowned sculptor Guillemin.

Another famous company to be mentioned, is "L'Escalier de Cristal", producing art objects and furniture, all of high standard quality and innovating much with their Japanese decor. Highly remarked during the Universal Exhibitions, "L'Escalier de Cristal" collaborated with the greatest artists, such Gallé and Rousseau for glass- and ceramic wares, and the cabinet-makers Lièvre and Viardot, whom made furniture including sometimes authentic Japanese elements.

Biography :

In 1872, Alfred Perret and Ernest Vibert opened in Paris, at 33 rue du Quatre-Septembre a store that offered "natural bamboo furniture and cane seats" and all kinds of textile fittings for furniture. This furniture used for winter gardens and terraces of mansions knew then a resounding success. They developed their business around 1884 with their Japanese style furniture, very close to that executed by Gabriel Viardot (1830-1906). In 1886, the company appearing in the category of "Chinoiserie and Japoneries" offered, in addition to furniture and seating creation, works of art and inlaid furniture directly imported from the Far East ; an activity that expanded rapidly. Their exotic fantasy furniture presented at the Universal Exhibition of Paris in 1889 and 1900, rewarded them two silver medals. In 1894, the company was listed under the name "Perret et Vibert", headed by the son of Alfred Perret and Ernest Vibert. The same year, they redesigned their store on rue du Quatre-Septembre, creating ten new show-rooms, showing complete furniture sets of Japanese and Chinese style inspiration. It was not until 1895, that the company was finally named "La Maison des Bambous" and organized then in their shops an "exhibition of country furniture and seats for castles and villas", which was visited by Empress Eugenie to furnish her villa Cynnos at Cap Martin. She actually was a regular customer of the "Maison des Bambous" as she bought

repeatedly furniture. In October of the same year, the king of Greece George I "chose a variety of these cute small woodcarved and decorated bamboo furniture and seats" as well as several bronze and porcelain pieces from Japan to garnish his Winter Palace near Athens. As for the American millionaire, Mr. Vanderbilt, he commissioned the Perret & Vibert house, to embellish the lobby and the greenhouse in New York, a great collection of white and gold lacquered flexible rattan seats, and objects art of Japanese origin. "La Maison des Bambous" which already had in 1910 a branch established 170 boulevard Haussmann, moved definitely there its headquarters in 1917 to remain until its closure in 1994.