



Martin-guillaume Biennais Au Singe Violet Tric-trac In Mottled Mahogany French Empire Period



9 800 EUR

Signature : Au Singe Violet - Martin Guillaume Biennais
(1764-1843)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Mahogany

Length : 111

Height : 73

Depth : 58

Description

Martin-Guillaume Biennais Au Singe Violet
Tric-Trac in Mottled Mahogany, Empire Period
circa 1804-1810

"Au Singe Violet," the emblematic sign of
Martin-Guillaume Biennais (1764-1843),
epitomizes the excellence of this renowned
cabinetmaker, table-maker, and goldsmith to
Emperor Napoleon I.

Description:

This exquisite backgammon game table, also
adaptable for card games and convertible into a
flat writing desk, is a remarkable example of
craftsmanship from the Empire period. Crafted
from mahogany with mottled mahogany veneer, it
features two side drawers that pivot open,

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activated by secret push buttons. The top is a removable tray: one side is covered with green Empire baize, adorned with characteristic braid, while the other side, serving as a flat desk, is lined with black leather decorated with gilded Empire motifs. Once the tray is removed, a backgammon board is revealed, inlaid with bone and green-stained sycamore on an ebony background. The ensemble stands on four sheathed legs, ending in gilded bronze claw-shaped feet.

This piece bears four stamps *Au Singe Violet*, attesting to its origin and authenticity as a work of Martin-Guillaume Biennais (1764-1843).

The gaming table includes a complete set of 30 chips, two leather cups and four dice.

Historical Context:

In 1804, Martin-Guillaume Biennais delivered to the Imperial Palaces, including Fontainebleau, quadrille tables and various games in mottled mahogany with gilded bronze claw feet, showing similarities to the table described here.

Dimensions:

Height: 28.74 inches

Length: 43.70 inches

Depth: 22.83 inches

Condition:

This table is in very good condition, with recently replaced leather and baize.

Biography:

Martin-Guillaume Biennais, born in 1764, is a prominent figure in the history of French goldsmithing and jewelry. He began his career as an apprentice goldsmith before becoming one of the most renowned craftsmen of his time. He is particularly famous for being the official supplier to Napoleon Bonaparte, creating sumptuous pieces for the Emperor and his court.

Biennais opened his workshop in Paris, where he

quickly gained a reputation for his exceptional craftsmanship and refined artistic sense. His creations, ranging from tableware to jewelry, were appreciated for their elegance and precision. One of his most notable achievements is the sword of Napoleon I, used during the latter's coronation in 1804.

Biennais' emblematic sign, "Au Singe Violet," located in the heart of Paris, became a symbol of luxury and quality. The name "Au Singe Violet" is as intriguing as it is evocative. Although the exact origins of this name remain obscure, it is often associated with an exotic monkey, a symbol of curiosity and originality, qualities that characterized Biennais' works.

Biennais' workshop was a meeting place for the Parisian elite, attracting not only aristocratic clients but also artists and intellectuals. His pieces were often displayed in sumptuous windows, drawing the attention of passersby and consolidating his reputation as an exceptional craftsman.

Biennais also played an important role in the evolution of artistic styles of his time. He was able to combine the rigorous classicism of the 18th century with the aesthetic innovations of the 19th century, thus creating timeless pieces that continue to inspire craftsmen today.

In addition to his work for Napoleon, Biennais also created pieces for other members of the imperial family, as well as for international clients. His works were exhibited in prestigious exhibitions and won numerous awards, thus consolidating his place in the history of art.

Martin-Guillaume Biennais died in 1843, leaving behind an immense artistic legacy. His sign, "Au Singe Violet," remains a symbol of French craftsmanship excellence and a testament to the golden age of Parisian goldsmithing. Today, his

pieces are sought after by collectors and exhibited in museums around the world, thus perpetuating the memory of this master goldsmith.