



PROANTIC
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Boulle Blue Tortoise Shell Cabinet



8 500 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Wood marquetry

Width : 95 cm

Height : 105 cm

Depth : 45 cm

Description

We are privileged to present a strikingly beautiful cabinet, a shining example of Boulle marquetry, a technique of unparalleled intricacy and visual impact. Popularized by André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732), cabinetmaker to the Sun King Louis XIV, this spectacular inlay method enjoyed a golden age in the 17th and 18th centuries before experiencing a notable resurgence in the 19th century, the period when this piece of furniture was probably made. This revival under Napoleon III, in particular, sought to recapture the magnificence of earlier eras, integrating time-tested techniques with a renewed taste for pomp and erudition. The Subtle Art of Boulle Marquetry and Precious Materials: The cabinet features a striking combination of brass and ebony veneers, creating a dramatic and luminous

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play of shadows and reflections, characteristic of the Boulle aesthetic. This technique involves simultaneously cutting several sheets of contrasting materials (here, shimmering brass and deep ebony) to create perfectly interlocking patterns, sometimes allowing the creation of a "first part" (where the brass is the main motif on a background of ebony) and a "counterpart" (the opposite). The complex interaction of these noble materials gives exceptional depth and visual texture to the entire piece of furniture. The front of the cabinet is sumptuously adorned with elaborate patterns, both geometric and floral, reflecting the taste of the period for lush decoration and motifs inspired by nature or antiquity. Every detail testifies to the meticulousness and expertise required by this demanding craft.

The Radiance of the Gilt Bronze (Ormolu) Mounts: The brass and ebony are magnified by the addition of sumptuous gilt bronze (more commonly known as ormolu) mounts. These finely crafted decorative elements feature a rich repertoire of intricate scrollwork, delicately crafted acanthus leaves, and other ornamental motifs. Mercury-gilt bronze, while technically demanding, was the preferred method in the 19th century for achieving this durable, lustrous gilt finish, which simultaneously protected and enhanced the furniture. These mounts are not only decorative; they also protect the furniture's vulnerable edges and joining points, emphasizing functionality in the service of art.

Intelligent Design and Decorative Impact: The cabinet likely features a single door, which may conceal a secret compartment or drawer, adding both functionality and intrigue to its elegant design. This practicality, often sought after in 19th-century furniture, fits perfectly with its refined aesthetic. The overall effect is one of timeless elegance and sophistication, characteristic of the finest achievements of French period furniture.

Key Points and Acquisition Potential: Authentic Boulle Marquetry: The cabinet displays the distinctive

and intricate patterns of Boulle marquetry, a prestigious technique that unites brass and ebony in a striking dialogue of light and shadow.

Original Gilt Bronze (Ormolu) Mountings: The inclusion of sumptuously crafted ormolu mounts enhances the visual appeal of the piece and gives it an unsurpassed touch of luxury. **Exceptional Craftsmanship:** The meticulous execution of the marquetry, the precision of the casting and the chasing of the gilt bronze mounts attest to the exceptional skill of the craftsmen involved, heirs to a tradition of cabinetmaking excellence.

Sought After Collectible: As a fine example of Boulle marquetry, a technique that has spanned the centuries centuries, this cabinet is a highly prized piece among collectors and represents a sound investment for lovers of antique French furniture. **Striking Visual Impact:** This cabinet is designed to be a central element, capable of transforming the ambiance of any interior distinguished by its majestic presence and historical refinement.