



Louis XV Style Display Cabinet Att. Louis Majorelle, Late 19th Century



9 700 EUR

Signature : att. Louis Majorelle

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Mahogany

Width : 72 cm

Height : 176 cm

Depth : 37 cm

Description

Louis XVI style heritage in the 19th century
The second half of the 19th century saw a return to favor of 18th-century styles, particularly the Louis XVI style. This display case perfectly illustrates this stylistic revival: its balanced, symmetrical lines, inherited from Neoclassicism, give it a sober, distinguished elegance.
Cabinetmakers of the Napoleon III and Belle Époque eras vied with each other to recreate the splendor of the Age of Enlightenment, using luxurious materials and refined ornamentation to seduce a wealthy clientele in search of prestige.
Description and materials
A high-quality piece of furniture, this display case is made from precious wood, probably mahogany, with a carefully selected veneer. It is glazed on all sides, allowing the objects on display to be admired

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from every angle. The interior is upholstered in period orange velvet, providing a warm, contrasting setting to showcase the pieces on display. The showcase opens through a main glass door; its generous dimensions (height 176 cm, width 72 cm, depth 37 cm) make it both imposing and functional, ideal for displaying objets d'art or porcelain.

"Martin varnish" decoration and gilded bronzes

The decorative crowning glory of this showcase lies in its central medallion adorned with an 18th-century galant scene, executed using the Martin varnish technique on a leather panel. Martin varnish, developed by the Martin brothers under Louis XV, is a lacquered varnish imitating oriental lacquers, highly prized in the XVIIIe century. It is used to reproduce painted scenes in delicate colors, protected by a transparent varnish giving a deep, satin finish. Here, the scene depicts figures in a romantic landscape, in the taste of Watteau or Fragonard, testifying to the care for authenticity and historicizing taste of the Belle Époque.

The framing and ornamentation are enriched with finely chased gilt bronze mounts. Floral garlands, knotted ribbons, rosettes and other neoclassical motifs in gilded bronze underline the contours of the display case and medallion, adding sparkle and relief to the whole. The bronzes, gilded with ground gold (ormolu), attest to first-rate foundry workmanship, typical of the great cabinetmakers of the late 19th century. In addition to their decorative aspect, these mounts protect the corners and give structure to the furniture. The quality of the chasing and the richness of the bronze decoration reflect an exceptional level of craftsmanship, in line with the royal creations of the 18th century.

Historical context and attribution to Louis Majorelle

This showcase, although unsigned, is attributed to Nancy cabinetmaker Louis Majorelle (1859-1926) on the basis of its model and workmanship, characteristic of the work of this renowned workshop. In Nancy, the Majorelle firm made a name for itself in the 1880s, producing high-quality Louis XV and

Louis XVI-style furniture known as "pastiches", before Louis Majorelle became one of the pioneers of Art Nouveau. The son of a cabinetmaker from Lorraine, Majorelle continues the tradition of excellence in French cabinetmaking. His workshop, based in Nancy with a store in Paris (56 rue de Paradis), supplies a wealthy Parisian and international clientele with a passion for period furniture. It's not uncommon for Majorelle's creations from this period to bear a label from his Nancy factory, attesting to their authenticity. The present piece of furniture is part of this high-end production context circa 1880-1890. The finesse of the carved and bronzed details, as well as the quality of execution, already foreshadow the Art Nouveau masterpieces Majorelle would produce a few years later. Several comparable works by Majorelle adorned prestigious interiors in the late XIXe century - for example, King Willem III of the Netherlands commissioned a set of furniture from the Majorelle workshop for his palaces in the 1880s. The showcase presented here, with its sumptuous decor and neoclassical elegance, perfectly illustrates Majorelle's savoir-faire at the height of the Belle Époque. Provenance: private collection of a wealthy Parisian family. Dimensions: height - 176 cm, width - 72 cm, depth - 37 cm.