A 17th Century Antwerp Gilt-bronze Mounted Tortoiseshell Cabinet



45 000 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Marquetry

Width : 162 cm

Height : 17 cm

Depth : 52,5

Description

A Flemish ormolu-mounted tortoiseshell, ebony, rosewood and bone cabinet on standAntwerp, mid 17th century Red-tinted tortoiseshell, rosewood and ebony veneers, with bone inlays, gilt-bronze mounts and ebonised wood.Original stand in ebonised wood, with tortoiseshell veneer and bone inlays.Overall dimensions: H. 176 × W. 162 × D. 52.5 cmCabinet: H. 101 × W. 158.5 × D. 51 cmStand: H. 75 × W. 162 × D. 52.5 cmConceived as the façade of a palace, this magnificent cabinet combines the lustrous richness of tortoiseshell laid over a red ground with precious woods and gleaming gilt-bronze mounts. Intended for the state rooms of a grand residence, it is as much a statement of magnificence as an expression of refined craftsmanship.Rectangular in form and surmounted by a balustraded gallery, the cabinet

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brings together a sumptuous array of precious and exotic materials: ebony, rosewood and red-tinted tortoiseshell. The translucent shell reveals deep amber, brown and vermilion tones, its richly varied figuring animating the entire façade. These glowing surfaces are set off by the crisp ebony-veneered borders, delicate bone stringing and brilliance of the gilt-bronze mounts.The façade is fitted with twelve drawers and a sliding shelf arranged around a pair of central cupboard doors. Two banks of five drawers flank the central section, with a broad drawer beneath the doors. Each drawer front is centred by a prominent tortoiseshell panel enclosed within a repoussé bronze border, ornamented at either end with cornucopias amid scrolling foliage. The succession of panels, layered borders and ripple mouldings creates a richly articulated surface, lending each compartment the appearance of a precious casket.The central doors feature arched tortoiseshell panels framed by delicate gilt foliate ornament. Tapering pilasters, surmounted by gilt-bronze cherubs supporting Ionic capitals, emphasise the monumental character of the composition. Above, a broken pediment frames an elongated tortoiseshell panel surrounded by scrolls, foliage, shells and cornucopias. Projecting cornices, stepped profiles and the crowning balustrade complete this architectural scheme, its carefully balanced symmetry lending order to the lavish decoration.The sides display an elegant geometric design of two superimposed lozenges set within rectangular borders. Fine bone stringing defines the rosewood veneers, whose lustrous grain contrasts with the ebony-veneered ground.A Mirrored Interior Evoking a Palace GalleryThe doors open to reveal a second setting, more intimate yet equally sumptuous. Veneered on the inside in rosewood and outlined with bone stringing, they disclose an elaborate mirrored architectural recess, with gilt spiral columns supporting a succession of arches. Reflected in the mirrors, the colonnades appear to extend into the distance, transforming the cabinet's compact

interior into a miniature palace gallery.At the centre, an arched niche framed by gilt columns houses a statuette of the crowned Virgin and Child, raised on a canted pedestal. A chequered floor in kingwood and bone creates a refined contrast between the dark tones of the timber and the pale bone. Repeated in the mirrors, its geometric pattern heightens the illusion of depth.Two banks of four small drawers, veneered in tortoiseshell over a red ground, flank the central recess, while a broad drawer occupies the lower section. The formal grandeur of the closed façade thus gives way to a theatrical display: the glow of gilding, the play of mirrored reflections and the richness of the materials combine to create an interior designed to surprise and enchant.The cabinet rests on a stand conceived as a continuation of its decorative scheme. The frieze, veneered in tortoiseshell over a red ground and edged with ebonised mouldings, is shaped into arches, each centred by a small turned pendant. Six spiral-turned legs, linked by stretchers and enriched at the top with gilt-bronze mounts, support the whole. Through its generous proportions and the rhythm of its supports, the stand extends the cabinet's architectural composition and enhances its majestic presence.With its sumptuous materials and monumental design, this cabinet was conceived not merely for storage, but as an imposing display of wealth, taste and refinement.