



Acquisitions

Furniture

• REINIER BAARSEN •

The Rijksmuseum's collection of Dutch furniture is the largest and finest in the world, and opportunities to enhance it with significant acquisitions do not often occur. It is a testimony to the taste and discernment of Fries Berkhout, a museum professional and furniture historian, who sadly died in 2012, that the three items which he presented to the museum in 2010 and 2011 were each in their own way a very welcome addition. The seventeenth-century miniature armchair with its original upholstery is a great rarity, and the japanned table and the bookcase inlaid with an embroidered panel are unusual and amusing examples of 'romantic' nineteenth-century furniture of a kind not previously represented in the collection. Mr Berkhout was particularly interested in Dutch nineteenth-century furniture. The Rijksmuseum collection in this field is still meagre, and he applauded the purchase of the documented bookcase of around 1863 made by the Amsterdam firm of Dethloff Siem.

In the new presentation of the Rijksmuseum galleries, opened in April 2013, there is no room for that large and unwieldy piece; indeed, only a limited selection of Dutch furniture is on display, but plans for a study collection especially devoted to this subject are underway.

Like all other types of decorative art, the museum's furniture collection is emphatically European in scope. The splendid coffer by

Boullé constitute a major enhancement of the Parisian holdings, made with the new presentation in mind. It is gratifying that various foreign objects have been acquired that illustrate the international orientation which has always characterized the decorative arts in Holland. A unique Baltic amber games box was originally in the collection of Stadholder Prince William IV and Princess Anne of England, and a Neo-Classical Parisian mantel clock was retailed by the Amsterdam clockmaker Rudolph Cresp. The set of furniture made in Paris in 1834 is decorated with marquetry by Ernst Blechschmidt, of precisely the same type that was used twelve years later by the cabinet-maker from Zwolle, Jan Kamphuis, for a table bought by King William II and now at Paleis Het Loo.

Many purchases were only possible thanks to the support from the BankGiro Loterij, the Mondriaan Stichting, the Vereniging Rembrandt, the SNS Reaal fonds, the Jaffé-Pierson Stichting and Mr H.B. van der Ven, who also donated the fantastic cigar casket by Diehl and Fremiet, which became a favourite with many museum employees during the installation of the new galleries. It had the rare distinction of acquiring a nickname: the 'Harry Potter casket'. The invaluable contribution made by these donors is gratefully acknowledged in the individual entries.

1 *Miniature armchair*

Netherlands, c. 1660-80

Walnut, upholstered with pressed silk velvet

Height 33.5 cm, width 21 cm, depth 21.5 cm

This is a well-preserved, elaborately carved example of a class of seventeenth-century Dutch miniature furniture of which the Rijksmuseum has a small collection. Too large for use in a dolls' house, such pieces were probably made as toys: a number of seventeenth-century Dutch paintings depict girls playing with a doll seated in a similar small armchair. Exceptionally, this example has preserved its fine original upholstery of red silk velvet, impressed with a linear pattern of stylized foliate scrolls.

This kind of miniature furniture was highly prized by nineteenth-century collectors of national antiquities; a number of pieces are in the collection of the Koninklijk Oudheidkundig Genootschap, on loan to the Rijksmuseum.

LITERATURE:

M. Restellini et al., *l'Âge d'Or hollandais*, exh. cat. Paris (Pinacothèque de Paris) 2009-10, pp. 286-89, nos. 117-21 (some other examples in the collection of the Rijksmuseum)

PROVENANCE:

Gift of J.G. Berkhout, Burgh-Haamstede, 2011 (inv. no. BK-2011-5).



2 Attributed to ANDRÉ-CHARLES BOULLE (Paris 1642-1732)

Pair of coffers on stands

Paris, c. 1685-90

Pine, oak and sycamore, veneered with tortoiseshell, brass, pewter, ebony and black-stained pear-wood, gilt bronze mounts

Height approx. 139 cm, width approx. 86 cm, depth approx. 61 cm

On the back of one coffer (BK-2009-255-2): E.LEVASSEUR (Étienne Lévassieur (1721-1798, *maître-ébéniste* in 1767) and JME (Jurande des Menuisiers-Ébénistes)

André-Charles Boulle was the most famous furniture-maker Europe has ever known. He was regarded as an artist in his lifetime, on a par with painters, sculptors and architects, and his reputation has never declined since. These two monumental coffers exemplify the style with which his name has always been identified. They are decorated with brass and tortoiseshell marquetry and fitted with a profusion of sculptural gilt bronze mounts. By simultaneously cutting a pattern from a sheet of tortoiseshell and one of brass, the marquetry artist obtained the components for assembling two panels. On BK-2009-255-1 the pale brass stands out on a dark tortoiseshell background; this is called *première partie*. On BK-2009-255-2, the *contre-partie* version, the materials are reversed.

The coffers correspond, albeit with many variations, to the *Coffre de toilette monté sur son pied* shown by Boulle in a set of engravings of furniture and objects of gilt bronze, the *Nouveaux Deisseries de Meubles et Ouvrages de Bronze et de Marqueterie* published probably around 1710-20. Examples of this large size must always have been extremely rare. At present only three are known: two, not originally made as a pair but later adapted to constitute one, in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and a single example in the collection of the Duke of Marlborough at Blenheim Palace. They are all of a different, probably slightly later type than the pair in the Rijksmuseum.

The *contre-partie* coffer is stamped by the late eighteenth-century specialist in Boulle furniture, Étienne Lévassieur. Lévassieur produced furniture in the style of the works of André-Charles Boulle, he adapted and transformed older pieces and, as in this case, he was active as restorer of Boulle furniture – clear evidence of the continuous popularity of pieces of this kind. The extent of his work on the coffer can no longer be ascertained; he may have been responsible for the addition of

the handles, of a pattern used by Boulle himself, but not originally present on this pair of coffers.

The coffers were bought in 1816 or 1817 from the Parisian dealer Madame Duval by the English collector George Byng (1764-1847) for his country house, Wrotham Park near London. The house was largely destroyed by fire in 1883, and it was probably on that occasion that the stand of the *première partie* coffer was lost. It was replaced with the present stand, which was expertly executed by an unknown maker, presumably in England.

LITERATURE:

P. Hughes, 'Boulle at Blenheim', *Apollo* 162 (2005), no. 525 (November), pp. 35-36, figs. 8-9 (the coffer at Blenheim)

G. Wilson et al., *French Furniture and Gilt Bronzes. Baroque and Régence, Catalogue of the J. Paul Getty Museum Collection*, Los Angeles 2008, no. 4 (the coffers in the Getty Museum)

R. Baarsen, *Paris 1650-1900. Decorative Arts in the Rijksmuseum*, London/New Haven 2013, no. 14 (with reference to earlier literature)

PROVENANCE:

Louis-Léon-Félicité, comte de Lauraguais, sale Paris, 12 March 1772 and following days, lot 20 (?); Antoine-Alexandre Dubois, Paris, sale Paris, 20 December 1785, lot 219 (?); bought by George Byng from Madame Duval, Paris, 1816 or 1817, and by descent at Wrotham Park, Hertfordshire; the 6th Earl of Strafford Will Trust, sale London (Christie's), 9 July 2009, lot 100, purchased with the support of the BankGiro Loterij, the Mondriaan Stichting, the Vereniging Rembrandt, with additional funding from the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, the SNS REAAL Fonds and Mr H.B. van der Ven, The Hague, 2009 (inv. nos. BK-2009-255-1, 2).







3 *Games box containing four smaller boxes*

Probably Danzig, c. 1734

Amber, partly on a wooden core, gilt copper mounts

Height 17.4 cm, width 32.9 cm, depth 22.6 cm; the smaller boxes height 6.1 cm, width 12.5 cm, depth 8 cm

This spectacular box and the four smaller boxes it contains are each carved with the arms of Stadholder Prince William IV and his consort, Princess Anne of England, whom he married in 1734. The box was probably a wedding gift from King Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia who was closely related to both bride and groom. The electors, subsequently kings of Prussia, had a virtual monopoly on procuring and working amber, the fossilized resin that in Europe was principally found in and around the Baltic Sea. From the Middle Ages, and even in Antiquity, this luminous material was highly prized, and objects fashioned from it figured in all the principal *Kunst-* and *Wunderkammern* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The stadholders, princes of Orange who had many family ties with the electors of Prussia, owned many important amber works of art from at least the early seventeenth century onwards, but this games box is the only example from their collections known to have survived.

The box is a relatively late instance of amber work, and its form and carved decoration are largely influenced by seventeenth-century prototypes. The shaped outline of the principal carved panels constitutes the most modern element of the design, clearly pointing to an early eighteenth-century origin, which of course is confirmed by the carved coats-of-arms. Amber works of art decorated with coats-of-arms are extremely rare; clearly the box was made as a special commission with the recipients in mind. In 1728 Friedrich Wilhelm I had given a large amber cabinet to Augustus the Strong of Saxony, and in 1733 he and his consort, a princess of England, had a smaller cabinet made for their daughter on the occasion of her marriage to the Duke of Brunswick. The smaller size of the games box reflects the lesser importance of the stadholder to the king of Prussia, but the coats-of-arms in particular mark it as a splendid princely gift nonetheless.

It is conceivable that the gift was presented to Princess Anne in particular. The box is listed

in the inventory of her personal belongings, drawn up after her death in 1759: 'Een groot en een kleinder vierkant amber kistje, in ieder vier quadrillekisyjes met haer visjes, waarvan eenige kistjes aan de hoeken beschadigt.' (A large and a smaller square amber box, each with four small quadrille boxes, with their fishes [playing counters], some of the boxes damaged on the corners.) The present box is likely to be the larger of the two listed, which together were valued at four hundred guilders. Apparently even at that time, the fragile amber had already been damaged. Princess Anne had a special predilection for amber and herself fashioned various simple objects from it, which figure in her inventory.

LITERATURE:

S.W.A. Drossaers and Th.H. Lunsingh Scheurleer (eds.), *Inventarissen van de inboedels in de verblijven van de Oranjes*, vol. 2, The Hague 1974, p. 763, no. 82

R. Baarsen, 'Speeldoos met vier kleinere dozen, vermoedelijk Gdansk (Danzig), Polen', *Bulletin van de Vereniging Rembrandt* 21 (2011), no. 1, pp. 22-25

PROVENANCE:

Almost certainly given to Stadholder Prince William IV and Princess Anne of England on the occasion of their marriage in 1734; by descent to Princess Marie of Wied, princess of the Netherlands; by descent with the princes of Wied; sale London (Sotheby's), 6 July 2010, lot v, purchased with the support of the BankGiroLoterij, the Mondriaan Stichting, the Vereniging Rembrandt and the VSBfonds, 2010

(inv. no. BK-2010-14).



4 *Mantel clock*

Paris, the movement by the workshop of Julien le Roy, c. 1768

Gilt and patinated bronze, enamel

Height 87 cm, width 42 cm, depth 26.5 cm

Signed in black enamel on the dial: *JULIEN/LE ROY*; engraved on the backplate: *Julien Le Roy Paris*; scratched on the spring of the going train: *Buzot 8bre 1768 Mouvement*; scratched on the spring on the striking train: *Buzot 8bre 1768 Sonerie*.

The signatures of the spring-maker Buzot, probably either Charles (died before 1772) or his son, Jean-Charles (1740-after 1784), were discovered during recent restoration work. They are dated October 1768, which provides an approximate date for this clock. The model was perhaps created somewhat earlier. Its monumental use of the antique motif of a lyre, enlivened by only a small number of embellishments and additions such as the branches of berried laurel, makes it an impressive example of the early Neo-Classical style. The crouching dragon, wounded by the lance that pierces its body and has been broken off in the struggle, provides an unexpected contrast of movement and pathos. Executed in patinated bronze, the animal is disproportionately small when compared with the lyre. This kind of illogical juxtaposition of disparate elements was a characteristic of Rococo works of art that was sharply criticized by the style's many detractors. In the present context, the dragon mitigates the uncompromising nature of the gilt bronze case, in what can be regarded as a survival of Rococo taste. Iconographically, the combination of a lyre, symbolic of music and the god Apollo, and a slain dragon, symbolic of evil that has been conquered, cannot be easily explained. It is not known who created the model of the clock, nor who executed it in gilt and patinated bronze.

Two other clocks of this model are known, both in the Swedish royal collection. They were not acquired as a pair: one was probably bought privately by King Gustav III who took it to Drottningholm Palace after 1777, whereas the other appears to have been bought, second-hand, as late as 1797. Both may have been imported by a dealer in Stockholm; both also bear the signature of Julien le Roy. This famous clock-maker was born in 1689 and died in 1759. His workshop was taken over by his son Pierre III (1717-1785), who continued to use his name.

LITERATURE:

- S. Eriksen, *Early Neo-Classicism in France*, London 1974, p. 100 and fig. 194 (an example in the Swedish royal collection)
 J.-D. Augarde, *Les Ouvriers du Temps. La pendule à Paris de Louis XIV à Napoléon I^{er}*, Geneva 1996, p. 358, fig. 266
 R. Baarsen, *Paris 1650-1900. Decorative Arts in the Rijksmuseum*, London/New Haven 2013, no. 92

PROVENANCE:

- Sale London (Sotheby's), 15 June 1990, lot 65; with Michel Meyer, Paris; Karl Lagerfeld Collection, sale Monte Carlo (Christie's), 28-29 April 2000, lot 43; sale London (Christie's), 8 December 2011 (unsold); purchased with the support of the BankGiro Loterij and Mr H.B. van der Ven, The Hague, 2011 (inv. no. BK-2011-55).



5 *Mantel clock*

Paris, the case perhaps gilded by Jean-Baptiste Vallée, the dial signed by Rudolph Louis Cresp of Amsterdam, c. 1770-75

Gilt bronze, enamel

Height 41.5 cm, width 39.5 cm, depth 18.5 cm

Signed in black enamel on the dial: *R.L.Cresp/AMSTERDAM*; later engraved on the backplate:

R.L.Cresp/AMSTERDAM.

Engraved on the tablet to the left of the base: *CORIOΛΑΙ/ΣΕΒΑΤΕΥΡ/ΡΟΜΑΙΩ.*; on the scroll to the left of Veturia: *ΜΟΙ ΦΙΛΣ/ΠΡΕΙΕΖ COMPATΙΟΝ/DE VOTRE CHER/PATRIE.*; on the helmet to the right: *ROME SAUVE/DE LA FUREUR/DES VOLQUES*; on the scroll below the helmet: *VOUS/MERE AFFLIGEZ/ROME EST SAUVEZ/MAIS VOTRE FILS/EST PERDU*; on the tablet to the right of the base: *VETURIE/MERE/DE CORIOΛΑΙ.*

Rudolph Cresp, the Amsterdam clockmaker whose name appears on the dial of this clock, originally came from the canton of Bern in Switzerland.

He moved to Paris, where in 1757 he married Marie Nicole Charrot; soon afterwards the couple settled in Amsterdam, where on 21 December 1760 their son Samuel Louis was baptized. Cresp, who became a citizen (*poorter*) of Amsterdam only on 10 January 1776, died on 26 March of that year.

Rudolph Cresp was one of the principal suppliers of Parisian gilt bronze clocks in Amsterdam, where they were in great demand; he doubtless made good use of the contacts he had established in the French capital. The catalogue of the sale of his goods held after his death – on 25 July 1776 and following days – lists numerous clocks and watches signed by Parisian clockmakers, along with gilt bronze *pendules*, obviously of Parisian make, but bearing Cresp's own signature, as does this example. This suggests that he had fitted those clocks with his own movements; in practice, however, that was not always true, and the clockmaker whose name proudly appeared on the dial was sometimes only involved as a dealer. In the present example, the original movement has been replaced by another eighteenth-century one, so it is no longer possible to determine the extent of Cresp's contribution.

The clock case represents Coriolanus giving in to his mother, Veturia, who beseeches him not to lead the Volsci in an attack on his own city in anger for what he considered Rome's injustice and ingratitude. In revenge for his desertion, he will be killed by the Volsci. In its portrayal of an elevating historical subject in Classical case, the clock case is characteristic of a large part of the Parisian production of the 1760s or 1770s.

Two other mantel clocks with cases of this model are known, both with dials and movements signed by Paris clockmakers. Both are fitted with a white marble base between the sculptural case and the circular feet. There are clear signs that the clock in the Rijksmuseum originally also had such a base.

The case is beautifully modelled and chased, and delicately gilded with a thin layer of gold. By virtue of its quality it stands out among the Parisian cases of mantel clocks with movements signed by Amsterdam makers, which tend to be less well finished; a typical example is a mantel clock with the figure of Prudence signed by Cresp, which was stolen from the Rijksmuseum in 1990 (inv. no. BK-1956-22; Baarsen 1989, cat. no. III).

LITERATURE:

R. Baarsen, *Meubelen en zilver op de tentoonstelling 'Edele eenvoud, Neo-classicisme in Nederland 1765-1800'*, Haarlem 1989, no. III (the mantel clock by Cresp, BK-1956-22)

J.-D. Augarde, *Les Ouvriers du Temps. La pendule à Paris de Louis XIV à Napoléon I^{er}*, Geneva 1996, pp. 147, 154 and 175 and fig. 112 (a clock of the same model signed by Pierre le Roy III)

R. Baarsen, *Paris 1650-1900. Decorative Arts in the Rijksmuseum*, London/New Haven 2013, no. 82

PROVENANCE:

Purchased from Bert Degenaar, Amsterdam, with funds donated by the Jaffé-Pierson Stichting, 2010 (inv. no. BK-2010-24).



6 *Tilt-top table*

Netherlands, c. 1830-40

Oak, partly painted in oils, partly japanned in black and gold, glass

Height 79 cm, diameter 59.5 cm

The top of the table features a painting of two women in Roman dress, copied from the principal figures in the picture *Een van zin* (Of One Heart), painted by Cornelis Kruseman (1797-1857) in 1830 and now in the Rijksmuseum's collection. Kruseman showed the painting in The Hague in 1830, when it was almost certainly acquired by the state for the Rijks Verzameling van Kunstwerken van Moderne Meesters (National Collection of Works of Art by Modern Artists), which from 1838 was exhibited in Paviljoen Welgelegen in Haarlem. It is not known under which circumstances or by whom the very competently executed copy was made. Its inclusion in the small tilt-top table, which allows it to be shown in an upright position, exemplifies the important role copies after well-known paintings played in nineteenth-century interiors.



Doubtless of Dutch manufacture, the table is a fairly simple but exceptionally well-preserved example of japanned furniture from the first half of the nineteenth century. From the late eighteenth century onwards, the production of objects decorated in imitation of Japanese and Chinese lacquer witnessed a revival in the Netherlands, and japanned wares were considered among the most successful and distinctive items of the Dutch displays at the national and international exhibitions held throughout the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, nineteenth-century japanned furniture that can be demonstrated to be Dutch is rare.

LITERATURE:

T. Eliëns, *Kunst, Nijverheid, Kunstnijverheid*, Zutphen 1990 (esp. 'Nederlands lakwerk in de negentiende eeuw', pp. 149-59)

J.M.W. van Voorst tot Voorst, *Tussen Biedermeier en Berlage. Meubel en interieur in Nederland 1835-1895*, Amsterdam 1992, p. 475, fig. XL

R. Baarsen, 'De Lelijke Tijd'. *Pronkstukken van Nederlandse interieurkunst 1835-1895*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1995-96, nos. 65-70 (Dutch japanned wares)

G. van der Ham et al. (eds.), *Netherlandish Art 1800-1900*, Amsterdam/Zwolle 2009, fig. on p. 98 (*Of One Heart* by Kruseman)

PROVENANCE:

Gift of J.G. Berkhout, Haarlem, 2010
(inv. no. BK-2010-8).



7 Executed by FRIEDRICH FRICKHINGER
the marquetry by ERNST BLECHSCHMIDT
Commode, secretaire and table

Paris, 1834

Oak, rosewood, mahogany and satinwood, veneered with rosewood, satinwood, purplewood, brass, copper and ivory, mounts of brass, tops of portoro gold marble

Commode: height 96.5 cm, width 131.5 cm, depth 58 cm;

secretaire: height 148.5 cm, width 100 cm, depth 48 cm;

table: height 78.5 cm, diam. 131 cm

The secretaire is signed in graphite at the back of an inner partition in the nest in the upper part:

Friedrich Frickhinger|Ebenist Aus|Nördlingen|Hat diesen Sekerathäre|Gemacht bei Meister|Blechmidt in Jahr 1834.

The signature in the interior of the secretaire is written in a place that is normally inaccessible and was only discovered during restoration work.

Nothing else is known about Friedrich Frickhinger, a journeyman cabinet-maker from Nördlingen in Bavaria. In 1834 his master, Ernst Blechschmidt, doubtless also a German, was established in Paris, where he had his workshop in the Place Royale.

In 1834 Blechschmidt showed his work at the exhibition of products of the French industries held in Paris. He participated not as cabinet-maker, but as manufacturer of *découpages pour meubles*, marquetry decorations to be inlaid or veneered on furniture. His work was characterized by the use of mother-of-pearl, brass and copper, and ivory, with various exotic woods, like the decoration of the set of furniture in the Rijksmuseum. A number of young cabinet-makers whose work was shown at the exhibition had decorated their furniture with Blechschmidt's colourful marquetry, but the wording of Frickhinger's signature suggests that he actually executed the secretaire, the commode and the table in his master's workshop.

Colourful marquetry was singled out by the critics discussing the 1834 exhibition as the most remarkable feature of the furniture on show, which on the whole they judged rather disparagingly, deploring the lack of innovation and taste evident in most pieces. The shapes of Frickhinger's furniture are also quite traditional, and the feet of the table, carved as lions, are somewhat coarsely executed and not entirely happily integrated into the overall design of the piece. The marquetry decoration is not only the most successful element from a technical point of view, it is also the most advanced stylistically: it is indebted to models from the Italian Renaissance

rather than to conventional Neo-Classicism. At the 1834 exhibition, Blechschmidt was awarded a bronze medal for his work.

Blechschmidt had left Paris by 1838, when a certain Sarnecki, *découpeur en marqueterie*, was listed as his successor. He went to Russia, where he became one of the most highly regarded cabinet-makers, working first in Moscow and later, certainly by 1847, in St Petersburg. He presumably left some of his patterns behind, perhaps with Sarnecki. As late as 1846, the cabinet-maker Jan Kamphuis from Zwolle produced a table top inlaid with the exact same pattern used on the fall-front of the secretaire in the Rijksmuseum. This marquetry had almost certainly been supplied from Paris.

LITERATURE:

R. Baarsen, 'De Lelijke Tijd'. *Pronkstukken van Nederlandse interieurkunst 1835-1895*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1995-96, no. 19 (table by Kamphuis)

R. Baarsen, *Paris 1650-1900. Decorative Arts in the Rijksmuseum*, London/New Haven 2013, no. 122

PROVENANCE:

Probably William Lidderdale (1832-1902), London; by descent in the Lidderdale family; purchased at the sale, London (Christie's), 19 March 2008, lots 139-41 (inv. nos. BK-2008-51 to 53).







8 *Bookcase*

Netherlands, c. 1835-45

Oak and mahogany, veneered with mahogany, inlaid with an embroidered panel in wool and silk, set behind glass

Height 219 cm, width 112 cm, depth 50 cm

The front of the bookcase is inset with a large embroidered panel depicting an amorous couple in medieval dress, in an interior evoking a Gothic chapel in front of which a curtain has been drawn aside. Colourful embroidered scenes of imaginary, romantic medieval scenes of this kind were particularly popular in the 1830s and 1840s; they were often set in screens or used to upholster seat furniture. In England they were known as 'Berlin wool-work', as apparently both the patterns and the wool were often imported from that city.

It is unusual to find such a panel used on the front of a big piece of case furniture, and indeed, the panel used here is exceptionally large. The bookcase itself shows a mix of Gothic, Renaissance and even Classical features. This fanciful combination of heterogeneous historic elements was characteristic of the beginnings of historicism; its romantic atmosphere suits the mood of the 'Troubadour' scene in the embroidered panel. Around 1845 the Gebroeders Horrix of The Hague supplied a set of rosewood furniture to Queen Anna Pavlovna, to be upholstered in similar embroidery, possibly worked by the queen and her ladies. This furniture is conceived in a similar mixture of Gothic and Renaissance elements, with comparable friezes of openwork tracery. Fries Berkhout, who acquired the bookcase at auction in Haarlem in 1998 and who gave it to the Rijksmuseum, discussed Anna Pavlovna's seat furniture in his pioneering article on Dutch Neo-Gothic furniture, published in the *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* in 1971.

LITERATURE:

J.G. Berkhout, 'Neogothisch meubilair in de collectie van het Rijksmuseum', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 19 (1971), pp. 65-66, figs. 17-18 (the seat furniture by Horrix)

R. Baarsen, *'De Lelijke Tijd'. Pronkstukken van Nederlandse interieurkunst 1835-1895*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1995-96, no. 16 (the seat furniture by Horrix)

PROVENANCE:

Sale Haarlem (Oprechte Veiling), 13-16 October 1998, lot 4040; J.G. Berkhout Collection, Haarlem; gift of J.G. Berkhout, Haarlem, 2010

(inv. no. BK-2010-7).



9 DETHLOFF SIEM

Bookcase

Walnut, partly stained black, and glass

Height 235 cm, width 260.5 cm, depth 60.5 cm

The cabinet-maker Dethloff Siem was originally from Schleswig-Holstein. In 1852 he opened a furniture shop in Kalverstraat in Amsterdam, followed in 1860 by a similar establishment in Lange Nieuwstraat in Utrecht. By the 1860s, his furniture factory had become the second largest in the Netherlands, after that of Horrix in The Hague. As he never appears to have stamped his goods, furniture known to be by Siem is rare. The Amsterdam Museum holds two large cabinets in the Rococo manner that carry his trade label.

An illustration of this bookcase 'from the shop of D. Siem in Amsterdam', after a drawing by J.H. Morrien, appeared in the periodical *Nederlandsch Magazijn* of 1863. Two years previously, Siem had won a silver medal for another bookcase which he showed at an exhibition in Haarlem; however, a critic writing on that occasion voiced a negative opinion about the style and elegance of his work.

The bookcase bears out this criticism. Quite closely based on an illustration of a similar piece that had appeared in an issue of the Weimar periodical, the *Tischler- und Drechslerzeitung*, of 1855, it is not as well-proportioned, and the carved decoration in the Renaissance style is coarsely executed. It is nonetheless an ambitiously conceived piece, if only because of its enormous size, and may well have been made as a special commission: it probably gives a good indication of the quality of Siem's furniture output.

LITERATURE:

J.M.W. van Voorst tot Voorst, *Meubels in Nederland 1840-1900*, Lochem 1979, vol. 2, p. 17, fig. 13

J.M.W. van Voorst tot Voorst, *Tussen Biedermeier en Berlage. Meubel en interieur in Nederland 1835-1895*, Amsterdam 1992, pp. 645-46, figs. 510-11

PROVENANCE:

Private collection, Belgium; purchased 2009
(inv. no. BK-2009-269).





10 CHARLES-GUILLAUME DIEHL (Steinbach 1811 - Lagny-sur-Marne? 1885)

the model attributed to BRANDELY,

the mounts attributed to EMMANUEL FREMIET (1824-1910)

Cigar casket

Paris, c. 1867-75

Walnut, interior fittings of cedarwood, mounts of silvered bronze

Height 27.5 cm, width 38.5 cm, depth 26.5 cm

With its angular, strongly articulated, sarcophagus-like shape and fantastic mounts, featuring animals and monsters, this casket is obviously related to an enormous cabinet shown by Charles-Guillaume Diehl at the Universal Exhibition held in Paris in 1867 (now in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris). That celebrated piece has in its front a large relief showing the return of the fifth-century Frankish King Merovich after his victory over Attila the Hun, signed by the sculptor Emmanuel Fremiet, who was known for his depictions of animals and warriors on horseback. The cabinet was designed by one Brandely, whose first name was probably Jean and who had already contributed proposals for furniture and marquetry to the previous Universal Exhibition in Paris, staged in 1855. Diehl had enlisted the help of these artists in a conscious effort to create truly original furniture, as opposed to the many pieces in a more or less correct Classical style that dominated the 1867 exhibition.

The critics were unanimous in their praise of his endeavours, but some did voice their doubts as to whether such a piece could be accommodated in a contemporary interior. Indeed, the cabinet did not find a buyer, not even when Diehl showed it again in Vienna in 1873; he himself was obviously pleased with it and produced a second version for his own use, which is now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

The cigar casket represents Diehl's revolutionary style on a small scale. Another version of it is known, as well as a somewhat larger humidior in a closely related manner, so there clearly were discerning patrons who were eager to own such a daring piece on a domestic scale. Its interior fitted for cigars, the casket would have been displayed in the smoking-room of an art-loving gentleman. Small caskets and other luxurious examples of so-called *tabletterie* formed the core of Diehl's production ever since this cabinet-maker from Steinbach in Hesse set up in Paris in 1840. He showed a number of highly acclaimed caskets in

1867; one of them, veneered with ebony and mounted with reliefs of *argent oxidé*, was said to display the salamanders of King Francis I. A crowned salamander within flames was the favourite emblem of that sixteenth-century monarch, and the reliefs on the Rijksmuseum casket may have been repeated from the casket shown in 1867.

Although closely related to the two great cabinets, none of the elements of the casket is actually copied from them. Its bold and striking shape was probably also designed by Brandely, and there can be little doubt that the highly distinctive mounts were modelled by Fremiet. They, too, are executed in *argent oxidé*, or *bronze vieil argent*, silvered bronze that has been treated to obtain an oxidized, 'antique' appearance.

LITERATURE:

- D. Alcouffe et al. (eds.), *L'Art en France sous le Second Empire*, exh. cat. Philadelphia (Philadelphia Museum of Art) etc. 1978-79, no. 55 (the cabinet in the Musée d'Orsay)
 D. Kisluk-Grosheide et al., *European Furniture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Highlights of the Collection*, New York/New Haven/London 2006, no. 101 (the cabinet in the Metropolitan Museum)
 R. Baarsen, *Paris 1650-1900. Decorative Arts in the Rijksmuseum*, London/New Haven 2013, no. 133

PROVENANCE:

- Sale Paris (Millon & Associés), 22 June 2009, lot 32 (unsold);
 sale Paris (Millon & Associés), 23 March 2011, lot 79; gift of
 Mr H.B. van der Ven, The Hague, 2011
 (inv. no. BK-2011-6).

