

La Pendulerie



Jacob-Desmalter

Important Suite of Three Mahogany, Mahogany-Veneered, and Gilt Bronze Consoles, Empire period

François-Honoré-Georges Jacob, known as Jacob-Desmalter (1770-1841)

Paris, Empire period, circa 1805

Central console: Height 98 cm; width 165 cm; depth 49 cm.

Side consoles: Height 98 cm; width 90 cm; depth 49 cm.

Stamps: JACOB D.R. MESLEE

These three mahogany and mahogany veneer consoles, comprising a large central console and two lateral consoles, have a simple, unadorned design that is embellished by fine chased and gilt bronze mounts. The aprons, which have protruding sides, rest upon two sloping front legs that terminate in lion's claws, and two back pilaster legs with molded bases. The solid bases are recessed. Each console has a rectangular Italian red griotte marble top and is elaborately decorated with gilt bronze motifs, such as medallions with male profiles wearing helmets and classical women, palmette motifs emerging from acanthus scrolls terminating in volutes centered by rosettes, seahorses, and a plaque with double thunderbolts framed by palmettes.

HISTORICAL

This very important suite of three consoles is a typical example of the Napoleonic esthetic. The Emperor appreciated unadorned, masculine design, decorated only with very high quality bronzes. Very few similar consoles are known to exist today; all are stamped by or attributed to Jacob-Desmalter. One such example was removed in 1804 from General Moreau's mansion in the rue d'Anjou, to be placed in the apartments of Cardinal Fesch in the Palais de Fontainebleau (illustrated in J-P. Samoyault, Fontainebleau, Musée national du Château, Catalogue des collections de mobilier, Meubles entrés sous le Premier Empire, RMN, Paris, 2004, p. 126, catalogue 63). A second piece was delivered in 1811 for the Petit Trianon (see D. Ledoux-Lebard, Versailles, Le Petit Trianon, Le mobilier des inventaires de 1807, 1810 et 1839, Les éditions de l'Amateur, Paris, 1989, p. 140). One further pair of consoles with no bronze mounts was purchased in 1924 by the Prince d'Essling and is now in the Villa Masséna in Nice (illustrated in L. Mézin, La Villa Masséna du Premier Empire à la Belle Epoque, Editions Somogy, 2010, p. 74-75).

Artist description:

François-Honoré-Georges Jacob, known as Jacob Desmalter (1770-1841)

May be considered one of the most important Parisian cabinetmakers of the first quarter of the 19th century. The youngest son of famous cabinetmaker Georges Jacob (1739-1814), in 1798 he married Adélaïde-Anne Lignereux, the daughter of the marchand-mercier and bronzier Martin-Eloi Lignereux.

Early on his drawing talents were recognised, and in 1796 he went into partnership with his older brother Georges II Jacob (1768-1803). They took over their father's workshop in the rue Meslée, founding the Jacob Frères firm. After the death of his brother, he went into partnership with his father and changed his stamp. For over a decade, they furnished the Imperial Garde-Meuble and wealthy connoisseurs of the period. However, in 1813, the delays in payment by the Imperial Administration caused the Jacob firm to declare bankruptcy. In 1825, Jacob Desmalter sold the remaining stock to his son, in return for a comfortable annuity of 6000 francs per year. Freed from his professional responsibilities, he was able to travel. One of his journeys was to England, where George IV asked him to help furnish Windsor Castle. He died in the rue Cadet in Paris on August 15, 1841.