

La Pendulerie



Jacob-Desmalter

An Important and Massive Neoclassical Mahogany Guéridon, Empire period

Circa: circa 1805

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

Paris, Empire period, circa 1805

Height 74 cm; diameter 110 cm

The round, molded green marble tabletop rests upon an entablature with a molded apron. The magnificent antique-style base is made up of three molded legs in the form of volutes centered by rosettes, which terminate in lion's paws. The legs are adorned with wide, finely detailed leaves, double volutes and half-palmettes. In the center of the stretcher is a spiral-turned foot that is supported by a small concave roundel with plain toruses. The legs and the central foot are linked by a triangular stretcher that is decorated with stylized waterleaves with rounded ends that rest upon three flattened molded feet.

HISTORICAL

The remarkable design of this important guéridon, and in particular the architectural treatment of its base and the absence of bronze mounts, emphasizing the table's strong lines and the quality of the mahogany veneering, rank it among the pieces of furniture that are most characteristic of the imperial esthetic. That style was encouraged by Napoleon as well as by the influential Parisian connoisseurs of the early 19th century. It represents an esthetic furniture style that was characteristic of one of the most remarkable workshops of the day – that of Jacob Desmalter, the maker of the present rare guéridon.

While the curved lines of its legs are reminiscent of designs by architects Percier and Fontaine, the Jacob workshop is known to have produced this type of guéridon during the Restoration on commission by the royal Garde-Meuble. Among these tables, one model was delivered in 1837, destined for the bedchamber of Queen Marie-Amélie at Trianon (illustrated in P. Arizzoli-Clémentel and J-P. Samoyault,

Le mobilier de Versailles, Chefs-d'œuvre du XIXe siècle, Editions Faton, Dijon, 2009, p. 346). A second example, from the furnishings of King Louis-Philippe at the Château de Neuilly, is illustrated in D. Ledoux-Lebard, *Le mobilier français du XIXe siècle, dictionnaire des ébénistes et menuisiers*, Les éditions de l'Amateur, Paris, 2000, p. 361.

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.