

THE
BEST
OF THE
Best



M.S. Rau
FINE ART • ANTIQUES • JEWELS

*Interior of the impressive Italian safe
on pages 70-71*





By the time our annual Best of the Best catalog reaches your door, we will be well into a new year that, I am confident, will bring us a somewhat return to normalcy. In so many ways, 2020 was challenging for us all, but like the objects in this catalog, we have persevered. If I have learned anything from history, it is that hard times pass, and I am confident that 2021 will be one of our strongest years to date.

Our future is indeed bright. In just a few months, we will complete renovations on our original historic French Quarter gallery, officially opening our new jewelry boutique. I pride myself on the quality and rarity of our jewelry collection, and now our one-of-a-kind gemstones and designer pieces will be displayed with the importance that they deserve.

A few of my favorite jewelry pieces are included in the pages that follow, as well as a selection of our best in fine art, silver, glass and furniture. Like a good book, I hope you will take your time as you look through these pages, as there is so much history and beauty to absorb and enjoy. If you see a piece you admire and have to have, please call us soon to work out the details. I hope to hear from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Rau". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Third-Generation Co-Owner & CEO



VINCENT VAN GOGH

The Sower

A significant early work, The Sower lends insight into the artistic development of the great Vincent van Gogh.

Few artists have captured the public's imagination like Vincent van Gogh. The archetypal misunderstood genius, van Gogh holds a distinctive place in art history and in the wider cultural landscape. *The Sower* was created during an important turning point in this great artist's career, representing his first forays into the art world.

The work is one of a series of artworks from the autumn of 1881, just a few months after he made the decision to become an artist. Prior to this, he had spent several years working variously as an art dealer, a schoolmaster and a preacher. Believing he had finally found his true calling, van Gogh threw himself headlong into a program of study, beginning with carefully observed drawings of the human figure. *The Sower* is one such drawing, capturing the lone figure of the sower striding across an empty field, casting seeds into the freshly turned soil, an act that promises new growth and life.

Using locals from the village as models, van Gogh would typically sketch the figure first before turning his attention to the background, employing a soft wash. Small touches of color in the figure, most notably the delicate blue tones of the sack, indicate van Gogh's growing confidence in his own skills as an artist as he began to adopt a more nuanced tonality in his depiction of rural figures.

Brush and sepia ink, charcoal, gouache and chalk on paper on board | Painted in 1881

Board: 23¹/₄"h x 17¹/₂"w | Frame: 33⁵/₈"h x 27⁷/₈"w | #31-2456

SUBJECT INSIGHT. The sower held an important place in van Gogh's imagination, and it reflects the profound influence the work of Jean-François Millet had on the artist. In fact, this composition closely resembles Millet's important Realist work, also entitled *The Sower*, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Like Millet, van Gogh felt a strong affiliation with the working class, and he sought to emphasize the dignity of labor in his works. He explored the subject of the sower again in his 1888 painting entitled *The Sower* in the Kröller-Müller Museum, which mimics the present work almost exactly in the positioning and pose of his subject.





EDOUARD MANET

Berthe Morisot

Composed by perhaps the most influential Impressionist and depicting another, this oil on canvas represents an important moment in 19th-century art history.

Few works so perfectly capture the artistic essence of a time and place as does this highly significant Impressionist portrait. The oil on canvas was composed by Edouard Manet, the *de facto* leader of the Parisian avant-garde, and it depicts the Impressionist painter Berthe Morisot, one of the most significant female painters in history.

Manet met Morisot in 1868; though she made her debut at the 1864 Paris Salon, she was still making a name for herself and welcomed the mentorship of the great artist. Manet painted her portrait on a handful of occasions, many of which were inspired by the works of Spanish painter Francisco Goya, the present portrait included. Morisot's dark features lent themselves well to the Spanish-influenced portraits, and she was often captured dressed in black, enhancing the contrast and luminosity of these compositions. Today, other Manet portraits of Morisot are in prominent museums, including the Musée d'Orsay, the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Manet's brushwork imbues the painting with a highly modern style that typifies his output from this period. A few bold, sparse brushstrokes deftly capture the angles of her face, the folds of her dress and the bedding upon which she lies. The style choice suggests the fleeting and upbeat tempo of modern life as Manet successfully updates the traditional figure of the odalisque for a new age.

Oil on canvas | Painted in 1873

Canvas: 20"h x 25³/₄"w | Frame: 31¹/₂"h x 37"w | #31-1475

ARTIST INSIGHT. Manet was undoubtedly the most important figure in the Impressionist movement. Considered the elder of the group, he was already a famous artist when Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Edgar Degas appeared on the scene. He earned his first honorable mention at the Paris Salon as early as 1861 and made waves with his scandalous *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*, now in the Musée d'Orsay, in 1867. The first artist of his day to paint everyday scenes of people and modern life, his paintings helped transition the art world from Realism to Impressionism in the late 19th century.

W. BOVVERE AV. 1898



WILLIAM-ADOLPHE BOUGUEREAU

The Frugal Meal

Painted in 1898 during one of the most significant periods of his life, The Frugal Meal is the ultimate expression of Bouguereau's artistic ideals.

No other artist embodies the principles of French Academic painting as perfectly as William-Adolphe Bouguereau, and his depictions of young peasant girls are among the most desirable of his oeuvre. *The Frugal Meal* represents a particularly fine example of his output. A celebration of childhood innocence, the work is appealing in both its subject matter and its masterful execution. Bouguereau was particularly skilled at capturing nuances of mood and atmosphere, and this work exemplifies his ability to replicate the softness and sincerity of youth.

Masterfully composed in the Academic style, *The Frugal Meal* reveals the artist's remarkable skill as a draftsman. A student of the Neoclassical artist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, his painting technique boasts an unsurpassed degree of finish and luminous coloration, distinctive hallmarks of the French Academy. Faultlessly composed down to the smallest detail, his young model, posed in a simple dress while enjoying a simple meal, embodies the Academic ideals of pastoral innocence. Bouguereau's handling of his young subject displays an especially unique sensitivity; his tender paintings of mothers, children and young girls are among his finest creations.

Signed and dated "W-Bouguereau-1898" (upper left) | Oil on canvas
Canvas: 35"h x 22¹/₄"w | Frame: 48³/₄"h x 35¹/₄"w | #31-1315

ARTIST INSIGHT. One of France's greatest artistic geniuses, Bouguereau can be counted among the most decorated artists of the 19th century. He received medals from the Salons and Universal Expositions, successive ranks in the prestigious Legion of Honor and was the leading member of the Institute of France and President of the Society of Painters, Sculptors and Engravers. He so dominated the Salons of his era that the official Salon became affectionately known as "Le Salon Bouguereau."

WORKSHOP OF BARTHOLOMAEUS SPRANGER

Leda and the Swan

A stunning work of Flemish art, this exceptional oil on panel retells one of the most legendary Greco-Roman mythological tales.

Lively and vibrant, this exceptional oil on panel of *Leda and the Swan* bears the very best characteristics of the workshop of the great Flemish master Bartholomaeus Spranger, exemplifying the elements that make his works so treasured.

Spranger was renowned for his painterly style that brought together northern European and Italian techniques. *Leda and the Swan* displays these same stylistic tendencies. The richness of color and the seductive expression of Leda recall the artistic masters of 16th-century Italy such as Parmigianino and late Michelangelo. It especially evokes Michelangelo's lost 1530s version of the same subject (a copy of which is in London's National Gallery), particularly in the placement of the swan and Leda's draped posture.

The painting's attention to detail, however, reveals a link to Netherlandish traditions. A number of elements can be directly linked to other works by Spranger; the lavish, bejeweled gold arm cuff that Leda wears on her upper left arm, for instance, is strikingly similar to the cuff that appears on the nude nymph Scylla in Spranger's *Glaucus and Scylla* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

Oil on panel | Late 16th century

Panel: 33⁵/₈"h x 46⁷/₈"w | Frame: 41⁵/₈"h x 54¹/₂"w | #31-0201

SUBJECT INSIGHT. The story, in which Zeus transforms into a swan to seduce the young beauty Leda, has been taken up by artists since antiquity, and this painting represents a particularly sophisticated rendition of the myth. Leda is depicted as a voluptuous female nude, as Zeus, in the form of a swan, hovers over her figure in the background. Their children, Helen and Pollux, surround their mother, while Cupid occupies the lower right corner of the scene.





. V . K . D .
ANNO ÆTATIS LXVI.

NACH CHRISTI GEPVRT IM 1564 IAP
DIESES PILDT HIE ABGEMALET WAR



NICOLAS NEUFCHATEL

Portrait of Valentin Kötzer

Imposing in character and impeccable in detail, this portrait by Neufchatel represents the German Renaissance at its finest.

Nicolas Neufchatel was one of the great portraitists of his age, and this imposing three-quarter-length portrait of the Nuremberg lawyer Valentin Kötzer is exemplary of his refined portrayals of the German elite. Never before publicly exhibited, it is among Neufchatel's most imposing and impressive portrayals of his relatively short career.

Kötzer was a lawyer of renown; he was appointed the legal adviser to the Council of Nuremberg, which involved providing legal advice and participating in negotiations and diplomatic missions. He played a significant role in updating the Nürnberger Reformation, a set of city laws that were originally penned in 1479. His work was published as the 4th edition of the Nürnberger Reformation in 1564, the same year that he died.

Neufchatel captures him radiating with confidence, his commanding figure dominating the canvas. The skill of execution is matched by the strength of personality and character that Neufchatel successfully captures. It was precisely this artistic acuity that led a number of his works to have once been attributed to Hans Holbein, whose portraits boast a similar truth to life and analysis of character.

Inscribed "V . K . D . / ANNO ÆTATIS LXVI." (upper left) | Oil on canvas | Dated 1564
Canvas: 39"h x 33¹/₄"w | Frame: 46³/₄"h x 41"w | #31-1630

ARTIST INSIGHT. Neufchatel was trained in the Flemish art capital Antwerp, where he studied under Pieter Coecke van Aelst and became a member of the revered Guild of Saint Luke. In the early 1560s, the artist relocated to Germany, likely for religious reasons, and gravitated to the Renaissance city of Nuremberg. An artistic center, Nuremberg boasted many prominent portrait painters in the 15th and 16th centuries, notably Albrecht Dürer and his pupil Georg Pencz. Neufchatel received a variety of noteworthy commissions, including an important commission from the City for portraits of the Holy Roman Emperor and his daughter.





KEES VAN DONGEN

Reclining Woman

In early 20th-century Paris, van Dongen was applauded for his groundbreaking modernity; this work dates to the height of his international recognition.

An artist whose career was defined by coloristic expression and unyielding originality, Kees van Dongen and his unique style grabbed the attention of early 20th-century art connoisseurs, ranking him among the leading Modernists of the era. Such expertise is showcased in the present composition, *Femme Allongée (Reclining Woman)*, a painting that epitomizes the artist's intense use of color and dramatic compositional style.

The work depicts a woman in repose on the sun-kissed shore of the beach, with two silhouetted horse riders galloping in the distance. Dressed in the most *au courant* of Art Deco fashion, she strikes a dramatic pose, casting shadows that cause her figure to become partially abstracted. The configuration draws to mind one of the artist's famous quotes, "A woman's body is the most beautiful of landscapes."

Van Dongen's daring use of unblended color reflects his association with the Fauves and the Expressionists, two 20th-century artistic groups famed for their bold, aggressive use of color. As a whole, it is exemplary of this master's highly original and coveted style.

Signed "van Dongen" (lower center) | Oil on canvas | Circa 1924
Canvas: 29¹/₈"h x 36⁵/₈"w | Frame: 36³/₈"h x 43³/₄"w | #30-8716

ARTIST INSIGHT. Above all, van Dongen was dedicated to the subject of the modern urban woman, and they remained central to his output throughout his career. He painted everyone from celebrities such as Josephine Baker and Brigitte Bardot to dancers, singers and prostitutes in Paris' infamous brothels. His portraits of society ladies remain among his most important; as is seen in the present work, he experimented with elongated forms that exaggerated both the elegance and the exoticism of his models.



ANDREW WYETH

Seated by a Tree

“The Helga Pictures” represent one of the most complete and poignant studies of a single subject ever made by a painter, contemporary or otherwise.

Andrew Wyeth is among the most highly regarded American artists of the 20th century, and his portraits of Helga are undoubtedly the most famous of his career. From 1971 until 1985, Wyeth composed approximately 240 drawings, sketches and paintings of Helga Testorf, a German immigrant who was his neighbor. When they were first revealed to the public in 1986, they were an instant sensation. Since then, they have been eagerly collected by public institutions and private individuals alike.

Wyeth’s stark, realist style was well suited to capturing the Teutonic features of the serious Helga. Composed in simple settings, the portraits feel deeply symbolic and highly spiritual. The present scene, which pictures Helga in the woods, is imbued with a sense of quiet melancholy and isolation, but also an intense intimacy that highlights this odd and secretive relationship between the artist and his model. In the short documentary *Helga*, Testorf described the first time Wyeth painted her, stating, “Overnight, I was reborn... somebody was really looking at me — really seeing me.” That deep emotion is keenly felt in this extraordinary work.

Signed “Andrew Wyeth” (lower left) | Watercolor on paper | Circa 1973
Paper: 27½”h x 21”w | Frame: 37”h x 30⅝”w | #31-1282

SUBJECT INSIGHT. What made the revelation of “The Helga Pictures” so dramatic was that they were created in complete privacy. Wyeth met Helga in 1970; she was the nurse of Karl Kuener, a neighbor of Wyeth’s who was also a frequent subject of his works. Wyeth formed a bond with Helga, creating his first portrait of her in 1971. What followed was 15 years of artistic exploration that remains unprecedented in the history of art, and which was done in complete secrecy — even from Wyeth’s own wife. It was only after he contracted a serious illness that he revealed the existence of the works to the world in 1986.

NORMAN ROCKWELL

A Bright Future for Banking

Rockwell's portraits of America not only record, but pay homage to, the unwavering American spirit and a belief in the country's bright future.

Few paintings capture our hearts like those by the great American illustrator Norman Rockwell. His very best works are those that reflect his own hopes and beliefs that the world would be a better place down the road – *A Bright Future for Banking* is one such painting. Enjoyed by millions of Americans in the June 18, 1955, edition of the famed *Saturday Evening Post*, it is quintessential Rockwell in both its story and its execution.

With his astute eye for narrative, he captures the hopeful expressions of these new graduates during what is likely their commencement speech. Each of his young subjects is contemplating the gravity of the moment and the seriousness of the adulthood that awaits them, while also exuding a youthful optimism that is present in so many of Rockwell's most beloved canvases.

America's favorite storyteller, Rockwell's talents were actively sought after by the most important publications and companies of his age. His early success as a cover illustrator gained him celebrity status, and advertisers clamored to feature a Rockwell original in their companies' advertisements. He painted *A Bright Future for Banking* in 1955 for Chase Manhattan Bank, and it is the only illustration he ever composed for the company.

Signed "Norman Rockwell" (lower center) | Oil on canvas | Painted in 1955
Canvas: 18³/₄"h x 22¹/₄"w | Frame: 23³/₄"h x 27¹/₄"w | #31-2362

ARTIST INSIGHT. Rockwell led a long and successful career as an artist. While history was in the making all around him, Rockwell chose to fill his canvases with the details and nuances of ordinary people in everyday life. Taken together, his many paintings capture the essence of the American spirit. Rockwell said, "Without thinking too much about it in specific terms, I was showing the America I knew and observed to others who might not have noticed."





JEAN-PIERRE CASSIGNEUL

Spring

One of the most popular living French artists, Cassigneul is set apart by his ability to produce works that feel both dramatically contemporary and classic in style.

Jean-Pierre Cassigneul's vibrantly colored oeuvre is a testament to his unflinching originality and highly personal style, displaying his unique fusion of French *haute couture* with traditional portraiture. This oil painting – one of the largest he ever composed – is classic Cassigneul, exuding a serenity and sophistication that is unique to his aesthetic. The artist is renowned for his portraits such as this, bringing together brilliant pops of color with an atmosphere of elegance and tranquility.

Entitled *Les Printemps (Spring)*, the work features two of his most common tropes: a sleepy-eyed beauty and a vibrantly colored garden. With its lush palette and flat spatial planes, Cassigneul's style follows in the tradition of the French Post-Impressionist group known as Les Nabis, which included celebrated French artists such as Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard and Maurice Denis. Expressionist painter Kees van Dongen was another important influence on the young Cassigneul, whose portraits resemble van Dongen's elongated, sharply contoured female forms.

Signed "Cassigneul" (lower left) | Oil on canvas | Dated 2019
Canvas: 51¹/₈"h x 38¹/₄"w | Frame: 61"h x 48"w | #31-0151

ARTIST INSIGHT. Cassigneul's grandfather was the founder of the ground-breaking French fashion house Jean Dessès. Raised among the glamor and excitement of the Parisian fashion world, the young Cassigneul observed models and dressmakers and runway shows from a very young age. His interest in art also manifested early, and he painted his first landscape at Deauville at the young age of 12. He studied at the École des Beaux-Arts, holding his first one-man exhibition at just 17. Since that first show, his work has been widely exhibited throughout the world, particularly in Western Europe, the United States and Japan.





WINSTON CHURCHILL

A Distant View of Venice

Highly personal, the art of Winston Churchill captures important moments from his life, from intimate family moments to his holidays abroad, including the present scene.

Churchill's dramatic brushwork and vibrant color palette bring to life this exceptional view of Venice from afar; it is a truly exemplary work in the artist's oeuvre. Capturing the city of water at a distance, the oil on canvas remained in Churchill's personal collection until his death in 1965, after which it passed by descent to his granddaughter.

In both its atmosphere and brilliant palette, Churchill betrays his love of the ancient city, which he frequently visited throughout his life. It was likely painted in 1951, when Churchill, then aged 77, traveled to the Lido with his family after their holiday in Annecy, France, was ruined by poor weather. Churchill packed up his wife and children, bringing them instead to the more temperate climate of Venice. The warmth of the region and Churchill's affinity for the Italian landscape is keenly felt in the present work.

Oil on canvas | Circa 1951

Canvas: 23⁵/₈"h x 29¹/₂"w | Frame: 32¹/₄"h x 39¹/₂"w | #31-2671

ARTIST INSIGHT. Churchill's reputation as a politician and statesman overshadows the tremendous talent he possessed for painting. A true Renaissance man, Churchill pursued the art of painting for more than 40 years, offering a glimpse into the personal life of the historic giant. There is little evidence that he had any artistic training prior to his 40s. In fact, his wife Clementine mentioned at one point that before he began painting, Churchill had hardly visited an art museum, much less created art. Churchill first began painting following a personal and political disaster, the Dardanelles campaign, in 1915. He is quoted as telling the painter Sir John Rothenstein: "If it weren't for painting, I couldn't live; I couldn't bear the strain of things." In 1948, he was bestowed the prestigious recognition of Honorary Academician Extraordinary by the Royal Academy of Arts. He painted roughly 500 works, approximately 350 of which are still housed in Churchill's garden studio at Chartwell. The few that ever come on the market are those he gifted to friends or bequeathed to his family.

ALFRED EGERTON COOPER

Winston Churchill in his Study at Chartwell

A man of undeniable strength and resilience, Winston Churchill stands as one of the greatest leaders of all time.

Very few lifetime portraits of Winston Churchill were ever painted, due to the simple fact that the man himself hated to sit for them. This portrait not only represents one of these rare lifetime renderings, but it also bears the distinction of having been painted by Churchill's favorite portraitist: Alfred Egerton Cooper.

Cooper captures the cigar-smoking, wartime hero seated in his study at Chartwell, proudly wearing his military medals. A mighty sailing vessel rests on the sun-soaked ledge in the background, a nod to Britain's historic naval might. The work makes manifest everything for which Churchill is most celebrated — seriousness, forthrightness in demeanor and his notable “blood, sweat, toil and tears” attitude.

Three years after the completion of the portrait, the artist used it as the model for the famed portrait that now hangs in the Carlton Club in London — an exclusive political club that claimed both Lord Randolph Churchill and Winston Churchill among its members. This important work also served as the cover piece of the Churchill Center's summer 1997 journal, *Finest Hour*.

Signed and dated "AEgerton Cooper RBA / WSC Chartwell 1947" (en verso) | Oil on board
Board: 23^{7/8}"h x 18^{1/8}"w | Frame: 32"h x 26"w | #31-2470

SUBJECT INSIGHT. As prime minister of the United Kingdom, Sir Winston Churchill presided over one of the most turbulent periods in world history. The pugnacious statesman led Great Britain to victory during World War II, while his now-legendary speeches inspired the country during her darkest hours. The only British Prime Minister to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature, Churchill was also an author, historian and painter in his private life.







PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR

Along the River

Perhaps more than any other Impressionist, Renoir possessed a deep appreciation for the French landscape, which he beautifully expressed through his art.

A leading painter in the development of the Impressionist style, Pierre-Auguste Renoir reveled in unspoiled visions of the French landscape, free from any signs of urban life. This oil on canvas, entitled *Au Bord de la Rivière (Along the River)*, perfectly illustrates his romantic visions of the French countryside, highlighting its timeless, picturesque charm that is unchanged by the ravages of time and industrialization. Ambient and atmospheric, the work evokes a harmony and tranquility that defines Renoir's very best landscape scenes.

Some of his most audacious experimentations in light and color were performed in his pure landscapes; free of any narrative or human element, Renoir was able to play freely with rough brushwork and vivid color palettes. *Au Bord de la Rivière* is a product of this experimentation. Swirling impastos, expressive brushwork and an unbridled color palette imbue this scene with the sense of impermanence that defined the Impressionist tradition. Brilliant pinks intermingle with yellows, greens and blues in the scene, while Renoir's quick strokes create the feeling of a windy day that is just coming to its end.

Oil on canvas | Circa 1896

Canvas: 18¹/₄"h x 22¹/₄"w | Frame: 26"h x 30¹/₄"w | #31-1147

SUBJECT INSIGHT. It was landscapes such as this, painted *en plein air* and infused with light, that would eventually give the Impressionists their now-legendary name. Following in the footsteps of Barbizon School artists such as Camille Corot and Jean-François Millet, Renoir and his fellow Impressionists moved from the studio to the countryside in order to conduct their artistic experiments with color and atmosphere. Capturing their most fleeting impressions in each and every brushstroke, the resulting landscapes changed the very nature of art.

PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR

Maternity

A touching reflection of maternal love, this important bronze represents the artistic ingenuity of one of history's most famed artists.

This poignant bronze sculpture executed by the great Impressionist Pierre-Auguste Renoir captures the artist's wife, Aline, breastfeeding their first-born son, Pierre. Both affectionate and engaging, it reveals an honesty and stylistic quality that is characteristically Renoir.

The bronze is based on Renoir's earlier 1885 painted masterpiece also entitled *Maternité*, which is in the collection of the Musée d'Orsay. The painting was completed in the first few months after his son's birth on March 21, 1885. At the time, Renoir had begun to turn away from the Impressionist style in favor of a more traditional aesthetic. The French Neoclassical painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres was his greatest influence during the mid- to late 1880s, which has since become known as his "Ingres period." His 1885 *Maternité* clearly demonstrates this admiration in both its compositional balance and its clear emphasis on volume, form, contour and line rather than color and brushstroke.

In choosing such a personal subject, Renoir was also offering a "modern" version of a classical theme – the Madonna and child. An intimate portrayal of a nurturing act, it is clear to see why the artist would choose to recapture this tender moment in sculpture.

Inscribed "Renoir," numbered 7/20 and stamped "C. Valsuani Cire Perdue" | Bronze
Conceived in 1916 | 10"w x 12"d x 21"h | #31-2635

ARTIST INSIGHT. Renoir was not a prolific sculptor, since arthritis crippled his hands just around the time he began working in the art form. In 1913, Renoir hired the sculptor Richard Guino to assist him in his bronzework. Guino proved to have an uncanny ability to understand and translate Renoir's style, thus helping the artist to create some of his greatest works in bronze, the present work included.







ORESTE INNOCENTI

Pietre Dure

The attention to detail required to execute such an object makes pietre dure of this immense size and artistry an absolute rarity.

Magnificent and colorful, this Florentine work of art appears to all to be a painting, but upon closer inspection is revealed to be a superb example of the art of pietre dure. It uses hundreds of varieties of polished marble and minerals in place of paint to create a charming scene of an elderly peasant couple seated at a table. The woman holds her rosary, while her husband enjoys a plate of beans. The plaque is highly detailed and amazingly realistic, from the couple's wrinkled faces and patterned clothing to the individual beads of the woman's rosary.

Each piece of marble and stone was carefully chosen for color and pattern, cut with the utmost care and precisely inlaid onto a stone base, thereby creating an image of such beauty and skill as to have the perfect *trompe l'oeil* effect.

This pietre dure plaque is featured prominently in the book *Painted in Stone* written by Ana Maria Massinelli.

Signed "Innocenti" (top center) | Circa 1890

Plaque: 15"h x 23½"w | Frame: 21"h x 29½"w | #31-2372

DESIGN INSIGHT. The art of pietre dure developed from the ancient art of *opus sectile*, where materials were cut and inlaid into walls and floors to form a decorative pattern. Florentine craftsmen revived the art during the Renaissance, and the first known hardstone workshop was established by the Medici family in 1588. Quickly growing in popularity, the art was also practiced in courts throughout Europe, and most especially in the courts of Naples, Madrid, Prague and Paris. The technique was expensive, requiring not only precious materials, but highly skilled craftsmen. As a result, true marble and stone pietre dure works such as this are very rare and highly collectible.



THOMAS CHIPPENDALE

George III Dressing Table

Thomas Chippendale is undeniably Britain's, if not the world's, most important furniture cabinetmaker, and this dressing table embodies his eye for quality.

Only a handful of Thomas Chippendale originals are known to still exist, and very few of those pieces ever find their way outside of museums and the original estates for which they were made. This kneehole dressing table by the workshops of Thomas Chippendale is almost certainly one of those rare few, displaying all of the hallmarks of furnishings that were made by the master's hand.

Crafted of Cuban mahogany, the table is complete with its original brass handles and bears Chippendale's trademark protective red wash underneath. Its neoclassical design features seven lockable drawers, including a top frieze drawer containing a felt-lined writing slide that unfolds to provide an extra working surface.

Chippendale made two other dressing tables nearly identical to this one for his most important commission, the famed Paxton House. The incredible attention to detail, impeccable proportions and the highest quality materials of these furnishings are evidence of Chippendale's commitment to pursuing perfection in his work.

Circa 1775 | 37"w x 21¹/₄"d x 30³/₄"h | #31-0316

MAKER INSIGHT. The talent and genius of Thomas Chippendale's designs dominated the furniture styles of the 18th century. He was the first person to claim such a strong following that an entire style bears his name and not that of a monarch. In 1754, he published *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director*, which was considered the "bible" of furniture design of its day. The book contained over 161 plates with a range of furniture in the Gothic, Chinese and Rococo styles. Subsequent publications of the text throughout Europe and North America propelled Chippendale into the international spotlight.





The frieze drawer is fitted with a baize-lined slide that encloses a fitted interior with an additional fold-out writing surface.



REGENCY

English Mahogany Hunt Table

Rarity, versatility and extraordinary craftsmanship – this exceptional English hunt table has it all.

Perfectly proportioned and beautifully crafted, this horseshoe-shaped table is an exceptional example of Regency-period cabinetmaking. Known as a hunt or social table, it was specially designed for serving food and beverages during a party or fox hunt.

It is ingeniously configured to be used in a multitude of ways. The brass bottle slide at its center holds two decanters and can be easily moved around the interior for serving. The table also features a brass rail that, when hung with a curtain, can serve as a fire screen or to protect the wall from spills. When used during a hunt, these bars would be removed to allow space for a servant to serve drinks to the riders. Finally, it can also function as a serving table, as it includes a center leaf that can be installed to create a demi-lune surface.

Such a multi-functional design makes these tables highly coveted, though they are rarely found on the market. To find an example with its original brass hardware is exceptional.

Circa 1820 | 74"w x 39"d x 29½"h | #31-1433





HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. The traditional end of the London Social Season was August 12, which marked the beginning of the hunting season when Britain's upper class would return to their long-held country seats. It was a golden age of the hunting party, wherein entertaining in the country became a vital part of the social season. Long considered the "Sport of Kings," hunting was exclusively the recreational domain of the nobility and aristocracy, and its popularity resulted in hunt-specific treasures like the hunt table that are today highly prized.

GILLOWS OF LANCASTER AND LONDON

Revolving Octagonal Library Table

Grand in both form and function, this impressive table reflects the superior craftsmanship and design of English furniture.

Measuring nearly 5 feet in diameter, this highly versatile library table has been attributed to the legendary Gillows of Lancaster and London. Crafted of mahogany, its striking octagonal design features a rotating top covered in tooled leather, while abundant carving adorns the pyramidal base. The masterful craftsmanship, refined details and superior form are all characteristic of Gillows' genius for design.

The table's four drawers bear Bramahrian patent locks from S. Mordon and Company, the highest-quality lock maker of the era. The firm's locks were both durable and highly secure, with keys that were extremely complicated to replicate. The added security makes this table the perfect place to store important documents.

Circa 1850 | 54"dia. x 30"h | #31-1268





MAKER INSIGHT. Founded in 1703 by Robert Gillow, the Gillows firm operated successfully as a family-owned business well into the 19th century. Originally based in Lancaster, Gillows was renowned for their quality of workmanship and innovative designs. No other firm in the country had managed to gain as far-reaching and prestigious a level of patronage than that of the Gillows firm, primarily due to the high quality and timeless beauty of their furnishings. They were especially popular among the English nobility, including the Earls of Wilton, the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Surrey and the Archbishop of York.

BLUE JOHN

English Rosewood Table by Gillows

Made for one of the great English estates, this Blue John table is a stunning example of both British craftsmanship and the natural beauty of this rare stone.

This one-of-a-kind table attributed to the famed Gillows of Lancaster and London is among the most impressive pieces of Blue John furniture ever crafted. Embodying all of the best attributes of this highly coveted stone, the Derbyshire Blue John slab that serves as the tabletop is not only large in size but also stunning in its natural hardstone patterns. The stone's translucent crystalline layers radiate outwards in bands of golden yellows, rich purples, and creamy whites that perfectly complement its spectacular rosewood base.

Hardstone furnishings such as this were popular among the British aristocracy during the 18th and 19th centuries, and connoisseurs actively sought out the most gifted artisans from whom to commission these masterworks. This particular table hails from an important titled British estate where it has been since it was designed and commissioned.

Circa 1840 | 24"dia. x 30"h | #31-1650

STONE ANALYSIS. The scarcity of this English stone makes a piece of this remarkable size quite rare. Due to its popularity, the largest veins of Blue John had disappeared by the early 19th century, and only a small amount of the stone remains today. Therefore, most examples of Blue John furniture feature inset veneers of smaller specimens of Blue John. By contrast, this table features a whole, intact slab of Blue John; such pieces are rarely found outside of the great English aristocratic estates.





TIFFANY & CO.

20.10-Carat Asscher-Cut Diamond Ring

The Asscher-cut diamond is among the most coveted gemstones in the world, and to find one by the celebrated Tiffany & Co. is a truly extraordinary find.

A phenomenally rare Asscher-cut diamond weighing 20.10 carats stuns as the centerpiece of this breathtaking Tiffany & Co. ring. Certified by the Gemological Institute of America, this diamond possesses I color and VS1 clarity, meaning it is virtually unmarred to the naked eye. The superior quality and monumental size of the outstanding stone is a testament to the superb workmanship of legendary jewelers Tiffany & Co.

True Asscher-cut diamonds of size are uniquely difficult to find, as very few stones feature this highly complex step-cut design. Asschers have more facets than any other diamond shape — 72 in total — so cutters often choose more conventional cuts. Finding a diamond that is suited to the cut is also complicated, as a stone must have excellent symmetry in order for the unique, tapered Asscher pattern to neatly form. Therefore, an Asscher-cut diamond with the perfect combination of carat weight and quality is a rarity.

Platinum | Hallmarked "Tiffany & Co." | #31-1106

GEMSTONE ANALYSIS. Diamonds are formed of nearly 100% carbon over the course of billions of years deep within the earth's mantle. The most enduring naturally occurring substance in the world, these breathtaking gemstones have been coveted by numerous cultures around the world over thousands of years. There is evidence that diamonds were being collected and traded in India as early as the fourth century B.C. In the first century A.D., the Roman naturalist Pliny is quoted as having said, "Diamond is the most valuable, not only of precious stones, but of all things in this world."



NATURAL WONDERS

Color-Changing Alexandrite Bracelet

A gemstone with ties to Russian royalty, the alexandrite can be counted among the rarest and most mesmerizing natural wonders ever discovered.

Twenty-five extremely rare alexandrites display their fascinating ability to change color in this unique bracelet. Totaling 8.24 carats, the emerald-cut stones exhibit a lovely bluish-green hue in daylight and a purple color when viewed under incandescent light. Often described as an “emerald by day, ruby by night,” the alexandrite is one of the rarest gemstones in the world, and it is certainly the most sought-after member of the chrysoberyl family. To find 25 examples so perfectly matched in size and color in a single piece of jewelry is beyond exceptional.

The center stone has been certified by the Gübelin Gem Lab as a natural alexandrite, meaning it has undergone no treatment or enhancements to achieve its unique color change. The rare jewels are set alongside diamonds totaling 7.34 carats.

Platinum | 7" length | #31-2364

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. While the alexandrite's ability to dramatically change colors in varying light makes it extremely valuable, the stone's history makes it all the more intriguing. The first alexandrite was discovered in Russia in 1834 on the birthday of Tsar Alexander II, and was thus named in his honor. Because the stone's natural color change resembles the national military colors of Russia – red and green – the tsar subsequently claimed all of the best examples of this natural chrysoberyl for the throne, making this the gemstone of royalty.



The rare alexandrites display the unique color change for which these gemstones are so loved.

CARTIER

Vivid Yellow and White Diamond Bypass Ring

Two extraordinary gemstones combine in this highly romantic bypass ring by one of the world's greatest designers of jewelry, Cartier.

Two captivating heart-shaped diamonds intersect in this ring from the House of Cartier. The first, an extraordinary 3.02-carat natural fancy vivid yellow diamond with VVS1 clarity, displays a highly saturated yellow hue, while the other, a 2.95-carat white diamond with E color and VS1 clarity, perfectly matches in brilliance. Each can be counted among the very best examples of their type, possessing exceptional color and clarity grades that set them apart from lesser-quality stones. Both diamonds have been certified by the Gemological Institute of America, affirming their superiority.

Cartier, the renowned French jeweler, is legendary for using only the finest materials and precious stones in their sought-after creations. This ring is a true testament to the company's unsurpassed genius for design.

18K yellow gold | Signed "Cartier" | #31-1729

GEMSTONE ANALYSIS. Vivid yellow diamonds are the most intense yellow diamonds to be found, achieving the highest possible color grading in the colored diamond scale. They are also among the scarcest of all diamonds, accounting for the tiniest fraction of all gem-quality diamonds found throughout the world. This example not only achieves this rare hue, but its VVS1 clarity grade means it is also virtually unmarred by any imperfection. In every possible way, this incredible stone exemplifies all the best qualities of this special and rare grading.



RENAISSANCE ARTISTRY

Renaissance Cameo Pendant

Cameos and intaglios were extremely coveted among wealthy connoisseurs in Renaissance Italy and owning the finest examples was the privilege of princes.

The cameo at the center of this exceptional pendant is a stunning example of the art of gem engraving during the Renaissance. Dating to the early 17th century, it features a rare Old Testament scene — the Sacrifice of Isaac — in the style of the Greco-Roman era. Such cameo jewels were hidden treasures that were only worn for special occasions and were passed on from generation to generation. Because of their importance, these large cameos received the best treatment when it came to their mounting, and this example is no exception. Set in 18K gold with a myriad of multi-colored gems, pearls and enamel, the cameo embodies the opulence and theatricality of jewels from the Renaissance age.

Very few Renaissance cameos remain in existence and even fewer in such elaborate pendant settings. The present example is among these rarities, while others can be found in the National Archaeological Museum in Florence, the British Royal Collection and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Cameo: Early 17th century | Pendant: 9"h x 5"w | Chain: 16" length | #30-8394

Visit msrau.com/30-8394 to view a video of this Renaissance masterpiece. 🍷



(back of pendant with quarter for scale)



SUBJECT INSIGHT. In the biblical narrative the Sacrifice of Isaac, God challenged Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, as a sign of his faith. At the very last moment before Abraham sacrificed his son, a messenger from god stayed his hand; the father and son then sacrificed a ram instead. This cameo depicts that final moment in the story. The central flaming altar is flanked by Abraham and Isaac preparing to sacrifice a ram, while the messenger of god stands in the left corner.



PLAY OF COLOR

Rare Opal Necklace

Exhibiting an incredible play of fiery color, the opal beads that comprise this necklace are among the largest and most beautiful to be found.

Forty monumental opal beads totaling 490.80 carats comprise this mesmerizing necklace. The graduated gems are not only impressive in size, but each exhibits a high level of translucence and extraordinary play of color.

Opals are not cut into beads often, as they are usually found in thin layers; deposits that are large enough to be shaped into a bead are extremely rare. Cutting the round structure also creates a great deal of excess – about 90% of the rough opal is cut away to create just one bead. Therefore, 40 matching beads of this size and exceptional quality are almost never found.

The gems are set with emerald beads totaling 36.12 carats and black onyx roundels.

27" length | #31-2461

GEMSTONE ANALYSIS. Opals are truly the stuff of legend. Revered for thousands of years, they were once described by famed Roman author Pliny as combining the best possible characteristics of the most beautiful of gemstones. In Ethiopia, the stones are generally found today beneath a thick 3-meter layer of welded volcanic ash, and the vast majority are quite dull. Only about 1% of these nodules contain any color at all, let alone the striking rainbow of hues that these beads exhibit.

ROYAL COPENHAGEN

Flora Danica Porcelain Dinner Service

Synonymous with royalty since its inception, Flora Danica has remained the crowning achievement of European porcelain for over 200 years.

Each of the 141 pieces in this complete *Flora Danica* porcelain dinner service for 12 features richly hand-painted and unique botanical motifs taken directly from the Danish atlas of botany of the same name. Distinguishing this particular service is the inclusion of 12 rare fruit plates featuring some of Denmark's native fruit species, including pears and green grapes. Each is a unique work of art executed with meticulous skill and artistry.

The creation of the *Flora Danica* service was the life's work of Johann Christoph Bayer, one of the most gifted porcelain artists of the late 18th century. Commissioned in 1790 by King Christian VII of Denmark for Empress Catherine the Great of Russia, it took Bayer over 12 years to complete the service. The motifs are culled from George Christian Oeder's 1771 publication *Flora Danica (Flowers of Denmark)*, an encyclopedia including 3,000 hand-colored prints depicting every wild plant known to exist in Denmark, including mosses, fungi, ferns and flowers. Unfortunately, Catherine died in 1796 before it was complete, and the service entered the collection of the Danish Royal Family.

All pieces display Royal Copenhagen marks | #31-1688

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. *Flora Danica* was first used on January 29, 1803, for the banquet celebrating the birthday of King Christian VII. Since that time, this exquisite pattern has remained the centerpiece of ceremonial occasions, weddings and visits by foreign dignitaries. Today, pieces of *Flora Danica* are exhibited in the Danish Royal Collections of Rosenborg Castle and Amalienborg Palace, as well as Queen Elizabeth II's private collection at Windsor Castle.





ROYAL VIENNA

Napoleonic Porcelain Urns

Urns of such artistry as these were commissioned almost exclusively by Europe's noble families, who recognized the quality and prestige of Royal Vienna porcelain.

Standing nearly three feet tall, these impressive Royal Vienna urns feature richly colored hand-painted scenes commemorating several of Napoléon's most significant victories. Each side of the vessels depicts a different, highly detailed Napoleonic scene, including the Battles of Wagram (1806), Jena (1806) and Friedland (1807), as well as a portrait of the lone Emperor on horseback. The scenes are modeled after French history painter Horace Vernet's epic depictions of these battles, which are held in the collections of the Château de Versailles.

Each base features Royal Vienna beehive mark | 21"w x 13½"d x 37"h | #31-1651

MAKER INSIGHT. For almost two centuries, the Imperial and Royal Porcelain Factory Vienna, commonly referred to as Royal Vienna, was the premier producer of porcelain in the region. Founded in 1718, the factory was sold to the Habsburg court in 1744, and Austrian royalty operated the factory until 1864, at which time it was put under museum administration. After its closure, the government allowed several other factories to buy its molds to make reproductions of the famous factory's pieces. At one time or another, there have been 21 different factories or decorating studios in Vienna producing Royal Vienna wares.



Napoleonic scenes adorn the front and rear of each monumental vase.





IMPERIAL SERVICE

King Louis-Philippe Tea Service for Sultan Mahmud II

Exceptional in beauty, rarity and importance, this extraordinary French tea service has not one, but two royal provenances attached to it.

The imperial palace of Yildiz Kiosque was once the home of this highly important French tea service, which was gifted by the French King Louis-Philippe to Mahmud II, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. The silver-gilt and porcelain service for 24 displays a superior craftsmanship worthy of its impressive provenance.

An exceptional expression of French artistry and craftsmanship, the set features an intriguing mix of Eastern and Western motifs. The porcelain is beautifully worked, displaying floral bouquets against green, blue and rose grounds. These colors held particular significance for the Sultan, whose household troops, the Janissaries, wore the colors blue, red and green.

Comprising 78 pieces, the service includes a silver-gilt teapot, creamer and a sugar bowl alongside its 24 porcelain teacups and saucers and 24 silver-gilt spoons. A cut glass tea caddy is also included, as well as two impeccable lacquered trays, one depicting an Orientalist landscape and the other with a floral motif. The service is complete with its original, custom black leather-fitted travel case lined in red silk.

The important service appears in a magazine article titled "Decouverte d'un service à thé Louis-Philippe" from a French publication dating to the 1970s.

Circa 1835 | Case: 34"w x 27"d x 9"h | #31-1570

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. The silver was crafted by the master silversmith Charles-Denis-Noël Martine, who worked in Paris from 1826 until 1837. Interestingly, they do not bear the trademarks typically seen on silver objects from this period, and the porcelain bears no marks whatsoever. Only kings could order objects without having their trademark affixed to them, since these orders were not intended for sale. The fact that these pieces are not fully marked help indicate their royal origin.







Two impeccable lacquer trays accompany the service.





TIFFANY & CO.

English King Flatware Service for 24

In terms of size, craftsmanship and overall rarity, this silver flatware service is amongst the finest Tiffany & Co. ever created.

Tiffany & Co.'s iconic *English King* pattern is presented in all of its splendor in this complete and monumental 664-piece silver flatware service for 24. A full array of place and serving pieces are housed in the service's fitted case, including rarities such as orange spoons and knives, game and terrapin forks and knives, and a cheese server, which elevate this extremely rare service above all others. Monumental services such as this in complete, pristine condition, nestled in its fitted chest, are extremely difficult to find.

Sterling silver | Marked "TIFFANY & CO/STERLING/PAT. 1885/M"

Circa 1910 | Case: 37¹/₄"w x 25⁷/₈"d x 37⁷/₈"h | #31-2459

DESIGN INSIGHT. Fashioned to reflect the elaborate entertaining styles of the Gilded Age, the *English King* pattern was introduced by Tiffany in 1885. Considered one of the most elegant patterns ever produced, the shell design is subtle in its differences from its English counterpart, yet retains the key design elements that endeared it from the beginning. The result is a classic design transformed by Tiffany's gift for innovation, which consequently received an exclusive patent. Though several versions of this pattern have been made in electroplate by virtually every major silverware manufacturer in the United States, Tiffany's version was the only one to be crafted in sterling silver. *English King* has remained one of Tiffany's most popular patterns and enjoys a following in the United States and abroad.





Photo Credit: Smithsonian Institute



JACQUELINE KENNEDY

Tiffany & Co. Presentation Box

Created by a legendary American firm and gifted by one of the most beloved women in history, this presentation box is an exceptional piece of Americana.

An extraordinary piece of American history, this Tiffany & Co. silver-gilt box was presented by Jacqueline Kennedy to Conrad L. Wirth, Director of the National Park Service (1951-1964), who was also responsible for the White House grounds renovation during President Kennedy's term. Mrs. Kennedy commissioned Tiffany to make the box for Wirth following the President's death as a token of their appreciation for his devoted service. In a letter from Mrs. Kennedy to Mr. Wirth, she mentions that the President had intended to honor Wirth with a Citation of Merit on July 4, 1964, in the Rose Garden, an event which sadly never took place. As Director, Wirth redesigned the Rose Garden, which President Kennedy favored for both private use and public ceremonies.

The box is engraved with the Presidential Seal and inscribed, "Conrad L. Wirth / with deep appreciation for / January 20, 1961 – November 22, 1963 / Jacqueline Kennedy."

4¹/₄"w x 3³/₈"d x 1⁵/₈"h | #31-2404

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. The letter that accompanied the box from Mrs. Kennedy to Mr. Wirth reads partially as follows: "This little gold box comes with a long story attached to it. President Kennedy was going to give you the Citation of Merit – this last Fourth of July... Now he is gone – and you are no longer the head of the National Parks. But the two of you will always be linked together – and you made possible for him some of his happiest hours – for which I am grateful to you forever. Once I knew, this winter, that he would never be able to give you the Citation which he wanted to give you so much – I had this little box made... Now that I am about to leave Washington I feel I must send it to you – as a poor substitute for what you would have had from President Kennedy. But, please accept it with our devotion – and please know that all you did was appreciated more than I could ever express."

TIFFANY & CO.

Chrysanthemum Tea and Coffee Service

Because of the intricacy and expense of the pattern, very few large Chrysanthemum sets were ever made, making this service an indisputable Tiffany rarity.

This impressive sterling silver tea and coffee service by the famed Tiffany & Co. was crafted in the firm's famed *Chrysanthemum* pattern. Inspired by motifs in Japanese art, this floral pattern quickly became Tiffany's most desirable motif. Due to its opulence, *Chrysanthemum* was the most expensive of all Tiffany stock to produce, and very few seven-piece services such as this survive.

This set comprises a large two-handled tray, a very rare hot water samovar, a teapot, coffee pot, lidded sugar bowl, creamer and waste bin. The pattern's signature flowers are expertly applied to each piece for a natural yet classically elegant appearance. Furthermore, the tray's body has been etched with chrysanthemum blooms, a decorative addition that is rarely seen on Tiffany silver trays.

A special dedication at the center of the tray reads: "John Nicholas Brown / from his mother on his twenty first birthday / December 17th, 1882." John Nicholas Brown (1861-1900) was the grandson of Nicholas Brown, the philanthropist who gave Brown University its name.

Hallmarked "Tiffany & Co. / Makers / Sterling Silver / 925-1000"

Tray: 30¹/₄"w x 2¹/₄"d x 19¹/₂"h | Kettle: 14¹/₂"h | #31-1841

DESIGNER INSIGHT. The *Chrysanthemum* pattern was conceived by the renowned Tiffany designer Charles T. Grosjean, one of the most influential silversmiths in Tiffany's history. The son of a silversmith, he joined Tiffany as the manager of the company's Prince Street silverworks and quickly became a driving force in the overall success of Tiffany's silver business. Grosjean's designs are among the most enduring of the Tiffany patterns and include *Chrysanthemum*, *Lap-over-Edge* and *English King*. *Chrysanthemum* found particular favor with Victorian socialites and new brides, and to this day it is regarded as the top pattern Tiffany & Co. ever produced.





INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATON

General Artigas Gunboat Clock

Made for the captains of industry to showcase new technologies, French industrial clocks are among the most coveted timepieces of their age.

This automaton gunboat clock is an exceptionally rare example of the complex artistry of industrial timepieces. Not only does it incorporate a clock, thermometer and barometer, it also includes an automaton that causes the propeller to spin and the turret to rotate 360 degrees when wound.

French industrial clocks are among the most creative and diverse timepieces of their era, designed to showcase the new technologies of their time and place. Combining precision timekeeping with mechanically-inspired automata, these clocks are extremely popular with collectors and difficult to find in such exceptional, working condition.

Circa 1885 | 23"w x 9"d x 14"h | #31-1277

Visit msrau.com/31-1277 to view a video of this industrial clock. 📺





HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. This timepiece is modeled after the Uruguayan Naval gunboat *General Artigas*, commissioned in 1883 and named for Uruguayan national hero, José Gervasio Artigas. The vessel was designed to float semi-submerged with its rotating gun turret above water. Rotating turrets were a new innovation that allowed guns to fire from either side without having to turn the boat around — a feature the clockmaker skillfully replicates. The model would have been specially made for someone in the Uruguayan government or navy, making it a wholly unique creation.



PRECISION HOROLOGY

Year-Going Regulator Clock

While regulator clocks are known for their incredible accuracy, this timepiece is truly exceptional in its mechanical proficiency.

This rare year-going regulator clock beautifully demonstrates the heights of precision clockmaking. The ash-veneered Biedermeier case houses a weight-driven precision mechanism, as well as a skeletonized center dial that allows one to view the intricate movement inside. It also possesses the ability to run on a single wind for an entire year — an amazing feat of mechanical engineering in and of itself that makes this one of the most important regulators ever made.

Crafted by the Prague clockmaker Ferdinand Karl Schmidt, the clock features a brass-plated movement with a deadbeat, or “Graham,” escapement. Its ingenious construction eliminates the recoil, and therefore the inaccuracy, of the more common anchor escapement.

Since a regulator’s purpose was primarily to provide accurate time, attention to its aesthetics was not usually of great importance. However, this clock, with its elegant case and skeletonized dial, was clearly created for a client who valued both beauty and function.

Circa 1820 | 17¼”w x 6¼”d x 53¼”h | #31-1221

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. Once primarily found in prominent public buildings, regulator clocks were the most accurate of the weight-driven clocks since their inception in the mid-18th century. Because of the expense to create them and their primary duty of being the keepers of time by which other watches and clocks would be calibrated, relatively few regulator clocks were ever made, as evidenced by the small number of antique specimens that exist today. This fact, in conjunction with its complex mechanism and overall workmanship, makes this regulator one the greatest known.



IRONCLAD SECURITY

Italian Floor Safe

Incorporating a complex locking mechanism and wrought-iron reinforcements, this safe was regarded as the most secure way to store one's valuables.

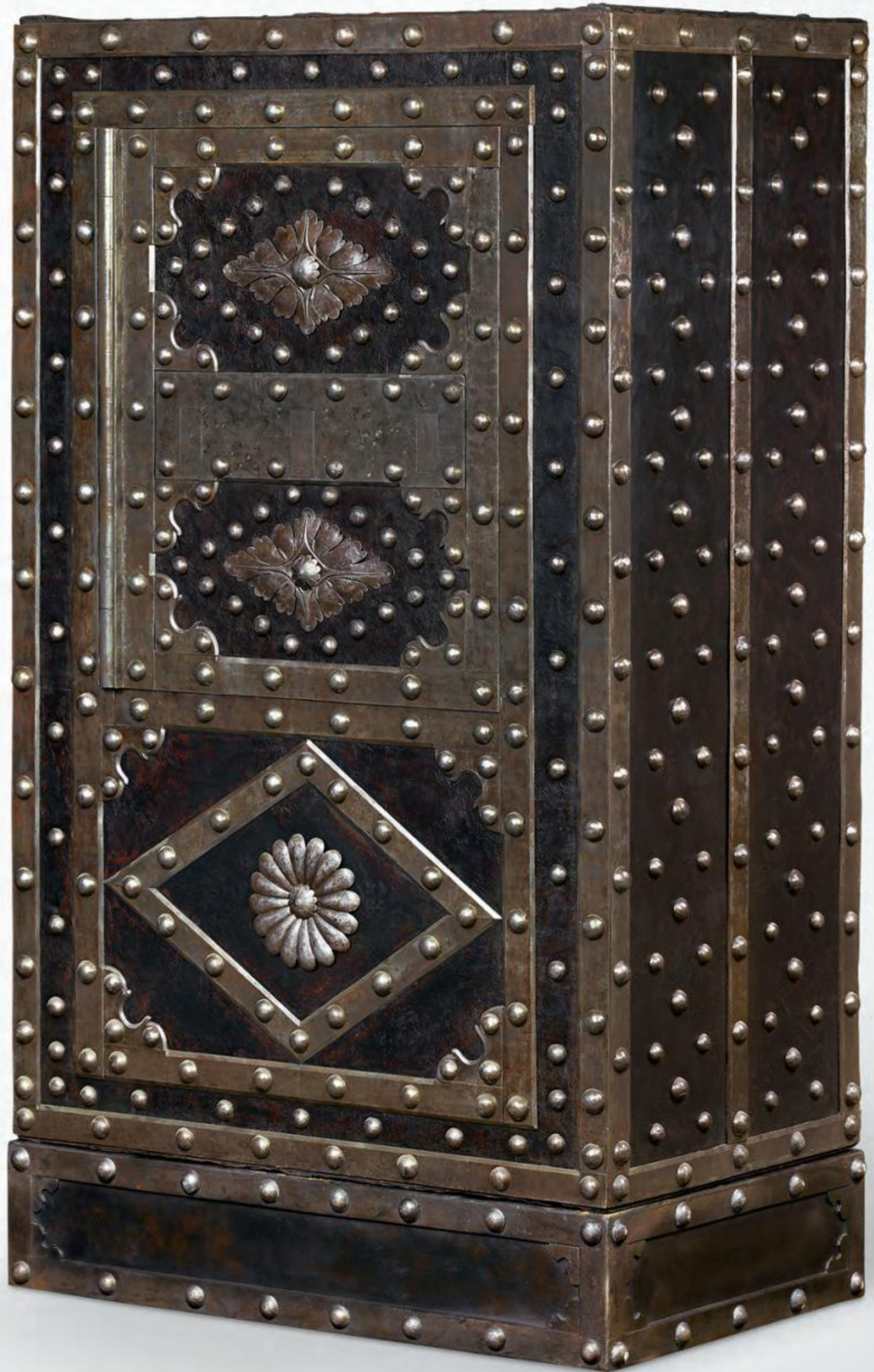
Large in size and constructed to be impenetrable, this fully functioning safe was crafted by Francesco Barbaglia of Milan. The entire structure is enfolded with thick sheets of iron and features an incredibly complex locking mechanism. Two keyholes are hidden behind secret panels that can only be accessed by manipulating four secret buttons on the safe's exterior. Due to its complexity, it would have required both partners be present at one time (one for each key) in order to open the safe and access its contents, making it one of the most secure safes of its age. The door opens to reveal an ample storage interior, as well as another hidden compartment with its own unique key.

The safe's grandeur and detail are clear indications that it was commissioned by an individual of tremendous power and wealth. Not only is it functional, but it is also an item of beauty highlighted by decorative ironwork elements on both the exterior and interior. Very few floor safes of this age and complexity are found in such impeccable condition today, and they are highly desirable.

Late 18th/Early 19th century | 39"w x 25¹/₄"d x 61¹/₂"h | #31-0700

Visit msrau.com/31-0700 to view a video of this impenetrable safe. 🗝️

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. Many of the earliest safes were used by churches within their sacristies to protect sacred vessels, parish records and other valuables. They were also used in lieu of banks by wealthy individuals, merchants and businessmen to store money, jewelry and important documents. Safes using multiple, unique keys were extremely useful for business partners because it meant that if each partner possessed a different key, it would require everyone's presence to unlock the safe, thus keeping everyone honest.





MERMOD FRÈRES

Swiss Ideal Music Box and Cabinet

Bringing together the artistry of French porcelain with the mechanical ingenuity of Mermod Frères, this music box is one of the most exceptional known.

This monumental Swiss *Ideal* interchangeable cylinder music box by Mermod Frères is one of only two examples of its kind known to exist. The other, which is virtually identical to the present box, was made for Nicholas II, future Czar of Russia, in 1878. The *Ideal* mechanism inside produces an absolutely beautiful, clear and crisp sound. Secured by a Jacot & Sons patented safety check, this fascinating instrument allows for song selections, as well as changes to tempo and amplitude with a simple adjustment. Its original booklet of hand-written tune cards and a total of eight cylinders (with eight songs each for a total of 64 selections) accompanies this impeccable musical treasure.

Apart from its complex mechanism, the case and cabinet are equally magnificent in every way, serving as both melodious entertainment and a fine example of late 19th-century furniture. Porcelain plaques and ormolu fittings adorn the polished ebonized box and matching cabinet. Convenient storage is offered in the cabinet's bird's-eye maple interior with drawers that protect the additional cylinders.

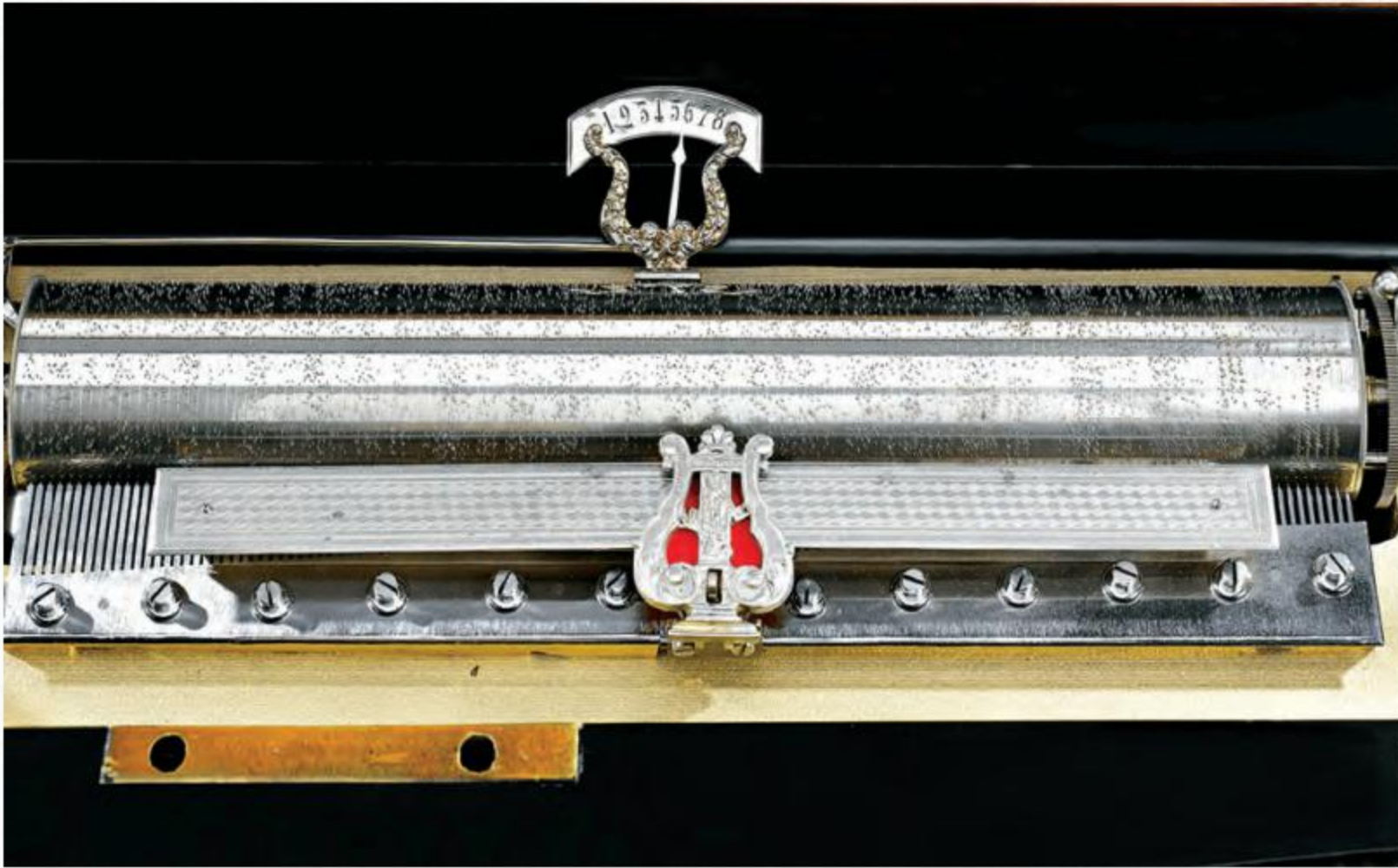
Features Mermod Frères shield; Plaques signed "A. Daret" | Circa 1886
Music box: 49¹/₂"w x 16⁷/₈"d x 10⁵/₈"h | Cabinet: 55"w x 21"d x 42¹/₄"h | #29-6583

Visit msrau.com/29-6583 to view a video of this complex music box. 🍀

MAKER INSIGHT. The legendary Swiss watch company Mermod Frères was founded in 1816 in Sainte-Croix, Switzerland. The firm's reputation as superior watchmakers was at the highest level when the family business was extended to include mechanical music makers. The company soon became one of the most distinguished music box manufacturers in all of Switzerland, producing prestigious pieces of both outstanding sound quality and remarkable craftsmanship.



The bird's-eye maple interior features four drawers that protect its eight additional cylinders.



The ingenious mechanism allows one to make specific song selections, as well as changes to the music's tempo and amplitude.



MILLS DOUBLE VIOLANO

Double DeLuxe Violano Virtuoso

Singled out by the U.S. government as one of the eight greatest inventions of the 1900s, this music player is one of the most incredible musical devices ever made.

With only a handful ever made, and even fewer known to exist today, this spectacular *Double DeLuxe Violano Virtuoso* is an important and extremely rare example of American musical automata. Created by the Mills Novelty Company, it features not one, but two brilliantly tuned 64-note violins accompanied by a 44-note piano.

The “Double Mills,” as it was nicknamed, plays classical, operatic and popular music with absolutely breathtaking, crisp tonal quality never before seen, or since duplicated, in musical automata. Patented in 1912, it was produced in limited quantities until 1929 and could only be found in the very finest restaurants, hotels and ocean liners. Up to 15 coins could be accommodated, and, depending on the number of songs on each roll, the *Violano* could play for up to an hour.

This particular *Violano* has been upgraded with a MIDI digital player system that allows song selections to be downloaded and played over Wi-Fi. This gives the user an almost limitless selection of period and modern music, as well as the choice between digital downloads or traditional paper rolls. It is truly rare to find a historical musical mechanism with such remarkable sound quality and in excellent condition.

Circa 1920 | 49³/₈"w x 34³/₄"d x 68¹/₂"h | #30-5245

Visit msrau.com/30-5245 to view a video of this musical marvel. 🎵

MAKER INSIGHT. The Mills Novelty Company of Chicago was once the leading manufacturer of coin-operated machines in the United States. While the majority of their everyday output included slot machines and jukeboxes, the company also produced incredibly complex automatic music players, and the *Double DeLuxe Violano Virtuoso* is considered the firm’s magnum opus. A slightly less complex *Violano Virtuoso* with only one violin is in the collection of the National Museum of American History (Washington, D.C.).





The *Double DeLuxe* model contains two independently playing four-string violins with the ability to reproduce 64 notes, as well as a 44-note piano.



The player retains its original labeling for the Mills Novelty Company of Chicago.



CHARLES BRUGUIER

Fusée Singing Bird Box

First created in the 1780s for royalty and wealthy noblemen, these absolutely spellbinding mechanical marvels continue to delight.

Exceptional in artistry and craftsmanship, this Swiss singing bird box represents the very best of these mechanical wonders. Not only was it crafted by Charles Bruguier, the most important bird box maker of his day, it is also one of the very few bird boxes that is crafted entirely from solid gold. Due to the remarkably high cost of the material during the early 19th century, almost all other bird boxes were made from gilded silver or base metals; gold boxes such as this were hardly ever seen, and even fewer exist to this day.

Adding to its extraordinary rarity is the incredible fusée movement that it contains. The earliest bird boxes were fusée, or chain driven, which meant they played longer and clearer than later models. The movement also allows the tiny automaton bird within to move not only its beak, but also its head and wings as it chirps its delightful song. To find a bird box by this important maker crafted from such luxury materials with a highly complex fusée movement is to truly discover the best of the best.

Circa 1840 | 3½"w x 2¼"d x 1¼"h | #31-1262

Visit msrau.com/31-1262 to view a video of this luxury automaton. 🍀

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. Singing bird boxes boast some of the most complicated movements of all automata. Also known as a *tabatière* (from the French for "tobacco," for they resemble snuff boxes), each box conceals a hand-feathered miniature bird that springs to life when activated. Few boasted the complex movement and luxury materials as this example, which is composed of hundreds of complicated moving parts within its diminutive case.





HERMANN RATZERSDORFER

Viennese Rock Crystal Charger

Since the Renaissance, rock crystal has been one of the most highly valued of minerals, beloved for its inherent beauty and its natural ability to refract light.

This monumental Viennese rock crystal charger attributed to Hermann Ratzersdorfer reveals the famed artisan's gifts as a silversmith, enamelist, jeweler and sculptor. Vibrant enamel figural motifs and semi-precious stones adorn the silver-gilt frame, which is beautifully sculpted with putti and scrolling decoration. Set within are panels of radiant rock crystal, each engraved to perfection with a motif of foliage and scrolls. The overall effect is one of luxurious opulence that evokes the grandeur of the Renaissance age.

When cut and polished, rock crystal produces a reflection of light far more brilliant than man-made crystal or glass. The scarcity of this crystallized quartz, however, limited its use; it was particularly prized during the 18th and 19th centuries when it was one of the most precious and expensive materials used in the decorative arts. This charger truly represents the heights of the art form.

Circa 1880 | 19½" dia. | #31-1521





MAKER INSIGHT. Ratzersdorfer was renowned for his silver, enamel and rock crystal objects executed in the then-popular neo-Renaissance style. One of the very few artisans in Vienna who earned the rank of master craftsman, he was the only one to resurrect the art of cutting and polishing rock crystal to such absolute perfection. He exhibited regularly in Vienna, London and Paris, winning a second-class medal at the Paris Exhibition of 1855 and being presented with a diploma of honor at the 1873 Exhibition in Vienna.

CAPITAL COLLECTION

Large-Denomination Currency

While today the largest U.S. banknote in circulation is the \$100 bill, these extraordinarily rare large-denomination notes are desirable collector's items.

\$10,000 1934 Federal Reserve Note

The highest denomination currency ever to publicly circulate, this \$10,000 bill is one of only a handful still known to exist. The extraordinarily rare bill features the portrait of President Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase. A true collector's item, almost all \$10,000 notes have been removed from circulation and destroyed by the Federal Reserve, though some are still held in museum collections such as the Museum of American Finance in New York.

This particular bill was once a part of the famed Binion Hoard, a collection of one hundred \$10,000 bills totaling \$1 million that were displayed in Binion's Horseshoe Casino, the most famous Las Vegas casino of its day. Its owner, Benny Binion, erected the much-publicized display of bills in 1964, embedding them in bulletproof glass beneath a gigantic horseshoe. The publicity stunt paid off, as Binion's Hoard became one of the most visited tourist attractions in Las Vegas.

Dated 1934 | #31-2660

HISTORICAL INSIGHT. Large-denomination currency first emerged in the United States in the late 18th century, with the first \$500 note being issued in North Carolina in 1780. They generally emerged during wartime, with large notes being issued during the War of 1812, the Civil War and World War I. The last series of high-denomination Federal Reserve notes were printed in 1934; the present examples are all a part of this series, which was discontinued in 1945. Today, they are highly coveted and exceptionally rare collector's items that far exceed their face value.





\$5,000 1934 Federal Reserve Note
Dated 1934 | #31-2661



\$1,000 1934A Federal Reserve Note
Dated 1934 | #31-2662



\$500 1934 Federal Reserve Note
Dated 1934 | #31-2664

THE ROYAL INCAN

Simon Bolívar's Inca Quero

Simon Bolívar was one of the most important leaders in world history, and this 16th-century quero represents a momentous time in the life of this legendary figure.

This historically important quero was one of a pair used by José Domingo Choquehuanca y Béjar – a descendant of the Royal Inca line – to toast Simon Bolívar for his triumph over the Spanish in South America. The important event not only signaled a new alliance but also an end to South America's colonial past.

The remarkable history that this quero represents began in April of 1775, when the first volleys of the American Wars of Independence were exchanged in Lexington, Massachusetts. The wars raged until April of 1825, when, under the leadership of Bolívar, the Spanish were defeated in Alto Peru. Following his successes, Bolívar became known as El Libertador, and he was named president of Gran Colombia (present-day Venezuela, Colombia, Panama and Ecuador), Peru and Bolivia. At the very peak of his power, he presided over a vast territory stretching from the Argentine border to the Caribbean Sea.

Choquehuanca followed the course of Peru's liberation closely, and he and his sister traveled to Pucara in order to toast the President of the new Republic with a pair of 16th-century queros. During his toast, he famously proclaimed, "With the passing of time your glory shall be exalted like the boundless shade of the setting sun." Choquehuanca then presented his two queros – he drank from one, while the present quero was used by Bolívar during the historic moment.

This quero is recorded and photographed on page 265 of *Historia del Peru*, Volume 3, by Jorge Basarde and Jose Manuel Valaga.

Circa 1540-1570 | 6¹/₄"w x 7¹/₈"d x 6¹/₂"h | #30-0511

Visit msrau.com/30-0511 to view a video of this historic cup. 🍷

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. Queros were both utilitarian and symbolic objects for the Incas. These paired drinking vessels were used as a means of witnessing the alliances and agreements forged between rulers. The toast was followed with an exchange of queros between participants, confirming their intention to abide by the terms of the toast with the quero as witness to the event. Today, most queros are held in important museum collections, though none claim the remarkable history of the present vessel.

Carbon dating tests confirm our quero dates to the mid-16th century, and its unique three-dimensional design is a work of art worthy of its royal history. Four jaguars fill the lower register; they serve as plinths for the men on their shoulders in a reference to Tawantinsuyu, the indigenous name of the Inca Empire, which means the four corners of the universe. The use of the jaguar also references the supports of the wooden throne of the Sapa Inca, the Inca emperor, indicating the vessel's royal lineage.

Three centuries later, Bolívar and Choquehuanca toasted with this quero and its twin, each filled with sacred aqha. The one used by Choquehuanca was given to Bolívar as a keepsake, while the one used by Bolívar – the present quero – was fortunately treasured by Choquehuanca and handed down within his family until it was sold to an American collector in the 1960s.



ADMIRAL LORD HORATIO NELSON

Battle of Copenhagen Wine Glass

Created for the most legendary figure in naval history, Lord Nelson, this one-of-a-kind wine glass is an important relic of British naval history.

This singular wine glass was made for and owned by the great British hero Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson, the most legendary figure in naval history. The only one of its kind, it is the sole surviving wine glass from a set commissioned by Nelson himself. It was crafted to commemorate Nelson's important victory at the Battle of Copenhagen in April of 1801, which he considered one of his greatest triumphs.

However, the victory came at a politically inopportune time for the British government, and thus the battle was not recognized with any official medals or souvenir items. Yet, Nelson perceived its importance both for himself personally and for the country historically. Thus, he commissioned his own set of souvenirs, the first being his famed Baltic porcelain service, and the second being a set of commemorative glasses to toast his own victory, of which this is the sole surviving example.

Circa 1801 | Glass: 2³/₈" dia. x 4" h | Case: 5¹/₄" w x 5" d x 7³/₈" h | #31-1842





HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. The Battle of Copenhagen occurred early in the Napoleonic Wars, and at that time Nelson was second in command to Admiral Sir Hyde Parker. The northern powers of Russia, Denmark, Sweden and Prussia had formed an armed coalition deemed a threat to British interests in the Baltic. Therefore, a British fleet under Parker's command was dispatched to dismantle the coalition. Nelson recommended an assault on the Danish-Norwegian fleet anchored in the harbor outside of Copenhagen on April 2; fighting against all odds, the British won the day for direct access to the city. It was a decisive victory for Nelson and the Royal Navy.

REGENCY SPLENDOR

Crystal and Ormolu Epergne

Inspired by ancient Egyptian design, this incredible bronze ormolu centerpiece is a paragon of Regency splendor.

The grandeur of Regency design meets superb workmanship in this cast ormolu epergne. Crafted after a design by architect Charles Heathcote Tatham, three imposing sphinxes support each corner, reflecting a fascination with Egyptian antiquity. The motif was originally created in 1801 for Tatham's major patron, the 5th Earl of Carlisle; in this epergne, it illustrates the Regency era's taste for elaborate, bold forms incorporating elements from the ancient world.

Intricately cast, chased and engraved with clear Egyptian influences, the centerpiece bears the hallmarks of masterful workmanship throughout. The craftsman was obviously well versed in Tatham's published designs as illustrated in the architect's tome *Design for Ornamental Plate*. In fact, the design of the base of this very epergne is illustrated within the pages and captioned "A Piece of Plate designed and executed in Silver for the Earl of Carlisle in the year 1801."

Circa 1805 | 24"w x 21"d x 18³/₄"h | #30-9075





DESIGN INSIGHT. This epergne illustrates the far-reaching design influences of Napoléon's Egyptian campaign, which not only had a strategic military objective, but it also marked the unprecedented beginning of the first extensive study into the history of Egypt. Tatham, in particular, was fascinated by the findings of these expeditions and took advantage of the new-found popularity of Egyptian motifs to meld them into designs he had studied personally in Rome. The result was a wholly unique oeuvre that emphasized the beauty of antiquity.

THE ART OF WAR

The Battle of Issus Chess Set

In terms of both mechanics and aesthetics, this remarkable chess set is one of a kind in every aspect and a true masterpiece of design.

Created entirely of gold, silver and semiprecious jewels by a master jeweler, this chess set is the only of its kind in existence and is one of the greatest chess sets ever made. Adding to its impeccable workmanship are the uniquely designed pieces, each of which is endowed with mechanical movements that bring the ancient Battle of Issus to life.

An apt reference to the military-like strategy of the game, what was one of the most important battles of the ancient world is beautifully retold here through pieces representing gods and goddesses, ancient structures and creatures of both Greek and Persian origin. Alexander the Great and King Darius III take their places as kings, while Athena, the Greek goddess of war, and the winged Persian god of war stand in as queens. Each figure is set on a rhodonite or malachite base that, when twisted, triggers movement. The ships row their oars, Alexander lowers his sword, archers tense their bows and horses shake their manes – so rich in appearance, the pieces truly come alive.

The board is as remarkable as its pieces. The sides of the board are formed from pure silver, sculpted in high relief to depict battle scenes that mimic the motifs in the game pieces. Archers, horsemen, chariots and elephants all engage in endless combat that heightens the drama of the game board.

25" w x 25" d x 6" h | #31-1086

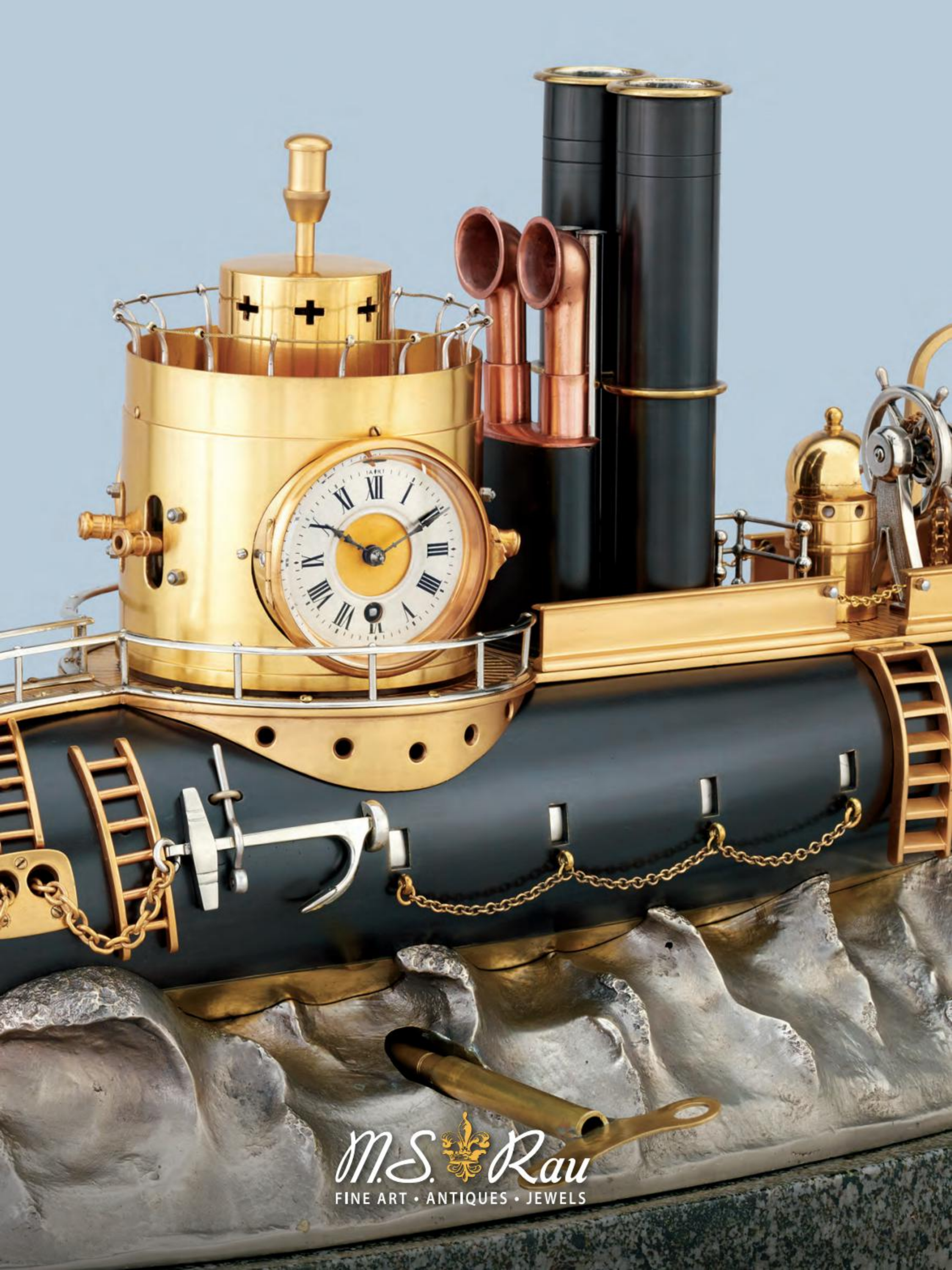






MATERIAL ANALYSIS. According to the original design drawings that accompany the set, this *objet d'art* contains approximately 9 pounds of 14K gold, 5 pounds of 24K gold, 11 pounds of pure silver, over 1,550 carats of garnets, plus hundreds of other gems including pearls, turquoise, rose quartz and enamel. A product of over 14,000 man hours executed over the course of a decade, this chess set is perhaps the most complex and extravagant ever created.

Each piece is endowed with movement that
can be activated by twisting its base.



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