

BUTCHOFF

EXCELLENCE IN ANTIQUES

Est.1964



A PAIR OF SUPERLATIVE DISPLAY CABINETS ATTRIBUTABLE TO GILLOWS OF LANCASTER

GILLOWS

H: 88.5 in / 225 cm | W: 52.5 in / 133 cm | D: 22.5 in / 57 cm

Constructed in mahogany, ebonized mahogany, purpleheart, burr oak, harewood, tulipwood and boxwood; with well cast brass grillwork and Carrara marble accents.

Of gentle breakfronted outline, rising from oblate spherical feet, the baseboards of concave form, with the backs having rectangular mirrored plates housed in a gilt framework within pilasters; the fronts show ring turned and lotus leaf carved, brass dressed columns with composite capitols; the friezes housing lockable drawers, with inlay of interlaced geometric form, and surmounted by marble platforms.

The superstructures have ranges of three drawers, and over, glazed central sections, dressed with brass grillwork of interlaced lentil form, with decorative foliates, which enclose shelved interiors, and the lower flanking side cupboards have blind doors, set with four octagonal porcelain plaques depicting the Four Seasons, within brass running pearl borders, on inlaid grounds of conforming geometric inlay, and framed within four ebonized wrythen columns, with composite capitols. The upper sections are adorned with exuberant brass galleries, with scrolled insets, and capped by ball finials. Circa 1865

Specific features in the construction suggest an attribution to Gillows, as well as there being a precedent for pieces of porcelain and brass dressed furniture.

Artist description:

The founder of the Gillows dynasty, Robert (1704-1772) rose from humble beginnings as a provincial joiner, and evolved into a consummate businessman following a pursuit of excellence throughout his life. Founding his business in 1730 he expanded his furniture making activities to include the direct import of quality West Indian timbers especially the finest mahogany.

His talents as both a cabinetmaker as well as innovative designer brought him early success, and, bringing his two sons, Richard & Robert, into the business, he expanded his Lancaster showroom, to include another in London's Oxford Street. The clientele now included the Government, the aristocracy and the burgeoning middle classes. His furniture had gained its' reputation for excellence of workmanship, and materials employed, and coupled with his insistence on being at the cutting edge of design kept the company to the fore throughout its' one hundred and seventy year history from 1730 until its' amalgamation with Messrs S.J. Waring in 1900.

Throughout this period it was the largest manufactory of furniture in England. The fortuitous survival of the Gillows records in their Estimate Sketch Books show over 20,000 designs and are preserved in the City of Westminster Library. Furniture made by Gillows is to be found in Royal collections and museums throughout the world. The recent publication of Susan E. Stuart's scholarly and invaluable study on the company, published by the Antique Collectors Club is a masterpiece of its' type, and a wonderful exegesis of the company.

