



**A MONUMENTAL BRÈCHE VIOLETTE FIREPLACE
IN THE LOUIS XV MANNER**

Dimensions: H: 53.5 in / 135 cm | W: 80 in / 202 cm | D: 21.5 in / 54 cm

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A Monumental Brèche Violette Fireplace
In the Louis XV Manner

The imposing brèche violette marble fireplace dressed with exceptional gilt bronze mounts throughout, its canted corners giving rise to magnificent carved volute jambs raised on ormolu hairy paw feet, and supporting the serpentine shelf; the frieze adorned with a lavish central ormolu cartouche of a winged shell flanked by scrolling acanthus leaves. The wide serpentine opening housing the original cast iron backplate, depicting classical figures from ancient mythology including Apollo and Pegasus.

French, circa 1880

A comparable chimneypiece, also carved from brèche violette and having a central shell motif was made for the grand salon of the Ministry of State, today in the Louvre. A true masterpiece, the fireplace was supplied alongside its mounts cast by Christofle at a cost of 15,300 francs in 1861,

equivalent to roughly £320,000 in today's currency.

Literature:

The designs for these majestic Napoleon III-period fireplaces were influenced by the Rococo chimneypieces installed in the Palace of Versailles for Louis XV in the eighteenth century. A genius of carved ornament, Jacques Verbréck (1704-1771) was responsible for the execution of the marble fireplaces in the palace, employing the equally renowned bronzier Caffieri (1678-1755) to model the bronze mounts.

Exceedingly rare, a single fireplace completed by the master craftsman Gervais Durand was made for the Comtesse de Biencourt, featuring the characteristic massively carved volutes on the jambs also present in the Butchoff fireplace.

The Vanderbilt family, at the time the wealthiest family in America, furnished their interiors with a series of fireplaces related to ours, which can still be seen in at the Vanderbilt Mansion (New York), and Marble House (Rhode Island).

Literature:

Alcouffe, Daniel, Anne Dion-Tenenbaum, and Gérard Mabilie. *Gilt Bronzes in the Louvre*. Dijon: Faton, 2004, pp. 312-313 (no. 161).

Camille Mestdag, and Pierre Lecoules. *L'ameublement d'art français 1850-1900*. Paris: Éd. de l'Amateur, 2010, pp. 110-119 (illus. figs. 107-108).