



**AN ENGLISH BLACK MARBLE & PIETRA DURA
TABLE BY THOMAS WOODRUFF**

Dimensions: H: 25 in / 63.5 cm | Dia: 30.5 in / 77 cm

9845



An English Black Marble & [Pietra Dura](#) Table

By Thomas Woodruff

'Inlayer to the Queen'

A superb pedestal table of refined proportions and design, constructed entirely from black Ashford marble, the circular top inlaid with a floral wreath executed in specimen stones, representing white roses, lily-of-the-valley, jasmine and even a passion flower with a malachite style, among green foliage. The tripartite based with oblate bun feet, the platform supporting the gadrooned, bulbous and baluster shaped pedestal. Bearing the original plaque under the top 'Manufactured by T. Woodruff / Inlayer / to the / Queen / Buxton.'

English, circa 1860

Woodruff's pieces are highly prized by collectors and museums, with his signed works being

particularly valuable.

Thomas Woodruff (1818-1903)

Thomas Woodruff was a master craftsman who revolutionized the art of working with Ashford Black Marble, a rare limestone from Derbyshire that, when polished, produced an extraordinarily deep, glossy black surface. Beginning his career as a marble mason in Bakewell in 1842, he later moved to Buxton where he expanded his business to include the sale of minerals and fossils, adopting the unique title of 'petrificationer.'

Woodruff's breakthrough came at the Great Exhibition of 1851, where his commissioned pieces for Prince Albert reportedly surpassed the work of Italian masters. This royal connection, along with [Queen Victoria](#)'s patronage, led to soaring demand for his work. He became known for his incredibly realistic inlay designs using various materials including Blue John, Siena Marble, and Florentine Green Marble, earning the title 'inlayer to the Queen.'

His work is characterized by exceptional attention to detail, particularly in his naturalistic designs that appeared almost three-dimensional, leading J.M. Tomlinson to describe him as 'the inlayer who brought the art to the highest perfection.'

Literature:

Comparative Literature:

See 'British Furniture 1820 to 1920' by Christopher Payne, 2023, pp. 174-176, illustrated figs. 4.7a&b, for a discussion of Thomas Woodruff and illustrations of the tables made for Prince Albert today in the Royal Collection.

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