

An important, petite, late-17th century, walnut-veneered escritoire

Sold



REF: 10396

Height: 157 cm (61.8")

Width: 91 cm (35.8")

Depth: 46 cm (18.1")

Description

The top with a moulded cornice, above a cushion frieze drawer. A single bead moulding above the quarter-cut, feather-banded fall-front with original escutcheon and lock. The upper-interior fitted with pigeon holes with secret drawers behind. A replaced door revealing a central cupboard, with four small drawers, flanked by four drawers with original drop handles retaining traces of their original gilding. A replaced drawer below flanked by two small drawers, and a replaced slide below revealing a secret compartment with two drawers. The flap with a replaced green baize-lined ratcheted writing surface. The lower section with two short and two long, feather-banded drawers faced with single-bead mouldings with original locks and escutcheons, and later period handles. The sides double-cut in straight grain. Standing on replaced bun feet. The carcass oak and pine, the drawers lined in oak.

Minor repairs to veneers. Excellent original colour and patina. Probably English, fourth quarter of the 17th century. 5127968.

This exceptional piece has exquisite, petite proportions, and was probably originally made for the lady of the house. The carpenter, undoubtedly a master craftsman, has both used, and symmetrically-arranged, the finest veneers such as the exceptional quarter-cut, burr on the fall and the grained, veneers on the fitted interior. The condition of this piece is excellent, and the colour and patina have matured to an excellent quality over time.

There was a great increase in letter writing during the Restoration, largely due to the institution of a national postal service, and cabinet makers quickly responded to this by turning their attention to constructing suitable furniture. During the fourth quarter of the 17th century, the incorporation of chains or stays fitted on each side of a large, fall-front enabled it to be supported when lowered as a writing flap. Cabinet makers displayed great ingenuity in the fitting of the interiors revealing series of drawers and pigeon-holes which often concealed secret drawers. During the last decade of the 17th century, the bureau was placed on a chest comprising two short and three long drawers creating increased storage space.