

MACKINNON FINE FURNITURE



Ince & Mayhew: A George III Serpentine Marquetry Commode

England, circa 1765

Ince & Mayhew

This rare and magnificent marquetry commode can be attributed to the leading London Georgian cabinetmakers Ince & Mayhew. William Ince and John Mayhew partnered together as 'cabinet makers, carvers and upholders' in 1758 and established a workshop in Carnaby Street before moving to Golden Square. In 1762 they published *The Universal System of Household Furniture* dedicated to the Duke of Marlborough. It was a folio of drawings and descriptions in both English and French that was produced in direct competition to their biggest trade competitor, Thomas Chippendale. Chippendale's *The Gentleman and Cabinet Makers Director*, which Ince had been a subscriber to, had first been published in 1754 and circulated around the country to the mainly aristocratic subscribers.

Ince and Mayhew's style was altogether more classical than that of Thomas Chippendale with elaborate use of inlaid woods and marquetry. They were very much influenced by the French taste. They worked closely with Robert Adam, most notably for Sir John Whitwell at Audley End in 1767, for the Duchess of Northumberland in 1771, for the Earl of Kerry in 1771 and, most importantly for the Duchess of Manchester in 1775 creating the Kimbolton Cabinet.

Ince & Mayhew distinguished themselves as exceptional cabinetmakers with particular skill at marquetry. Geoffrey Beard and Christopher Gilbert note that the two were 'highly proficient and adventurous [in] the use of marquetry, distinguished by a variety of techniques and pointing to a significant number of specialist marqueteurs in the firm's employ.'

Group of Commodes

This commode belongs to a group of eight commodes of similar serpentine form and with the characteristic use of floral marquetry on the yewwood reserve, which is associated with Ince & Mayhew's output. This group is spread amongst prominent public and private collections. The others are as follows:

1. Olaf Hambro, Esq., Linton Park, Maidstone Kent, Christie's House Sale, 2-3 October 1961, lot 110. Subsequently sold by the late Mrs Charles Mills, Hillborough Hall, Norfolk, Christie's House Sale, 21-23 October 1985, lot 73. The commode was sold anonymously, Christie's London, 5 July 1990, lot 141.
2. Martin Summers Esq., Sotheby's, London, 18 March 1966, lot 151. Illustrated in Anthony Coleridge, *Chippendale Furniture*, 1968, pl. 45.
3. The collection of Lady Russell. Illustrated in Percy Macquoid, *The Age of Satinwood*, London, 1908, pl. 11.
4. The late Margharita, Lady Howard de Walden, C.B.E., Sotheby's, London, 2 December 1977, lot 93.
5. Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York. Illustrated in Percy Maquoid and Ralph Edwards, *The Dictionary of English Furniture*, London, 1924, vol. II, p. 136, fig. 15 and illustrated in Coleridge, op. cit., pl. 43.
6. Sir Michael Sobell Collection. Subsequently sold in the collection of Lillian S. Whitmarsh, Park-Bernet Gallery, 7-8 April 1961. Previously in the collection of Sir Anthony de Rothschild, Bt., Aston Clinton and Lord Leverhulme, The Hill, Hampstead.
7. An English private collection, Christie's, London, 11 November 1971, lot 91.

An exceptional George III ormolu mounted serpentine marquetry commode attributed to Ince & Mayhew. The serpentine top centred with a rococo cartouche featuring exquisite floral marquetry on a yewwood reserve, above a conforming frieze centred with a brushing slide fitted with an inset leather panel, the case centred by a pair of cupboard doors with a large cartouche surrounding a floral bouquet tied with a bow and flanked by husk swags and trailing foliage on a yewwood reserve, the case with rounded canted corners featuring carved giltwood foliate C-scrolls, raised on an apron centred by an ormolu rocaille cartouche and raised on rounded bracket feet.

Exhibitions

The Grosvenor House Antiques Fair 2001

Literature:

Illustrated: Goodison and Kern, *Hotspur: Eighty Years of Antique Dealing*, London, 2004, pp. 224-25 (and on the cover)

Illustrated: *The Grosvenor House Art and Antiques Fair, 2001*, Hotspur, p. 128

Height: 33.07 in (84 cm)

Width: 59.06 in (150 cm)
Depth: 23.23 in (59 cm)

Stock Number

N03.75

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