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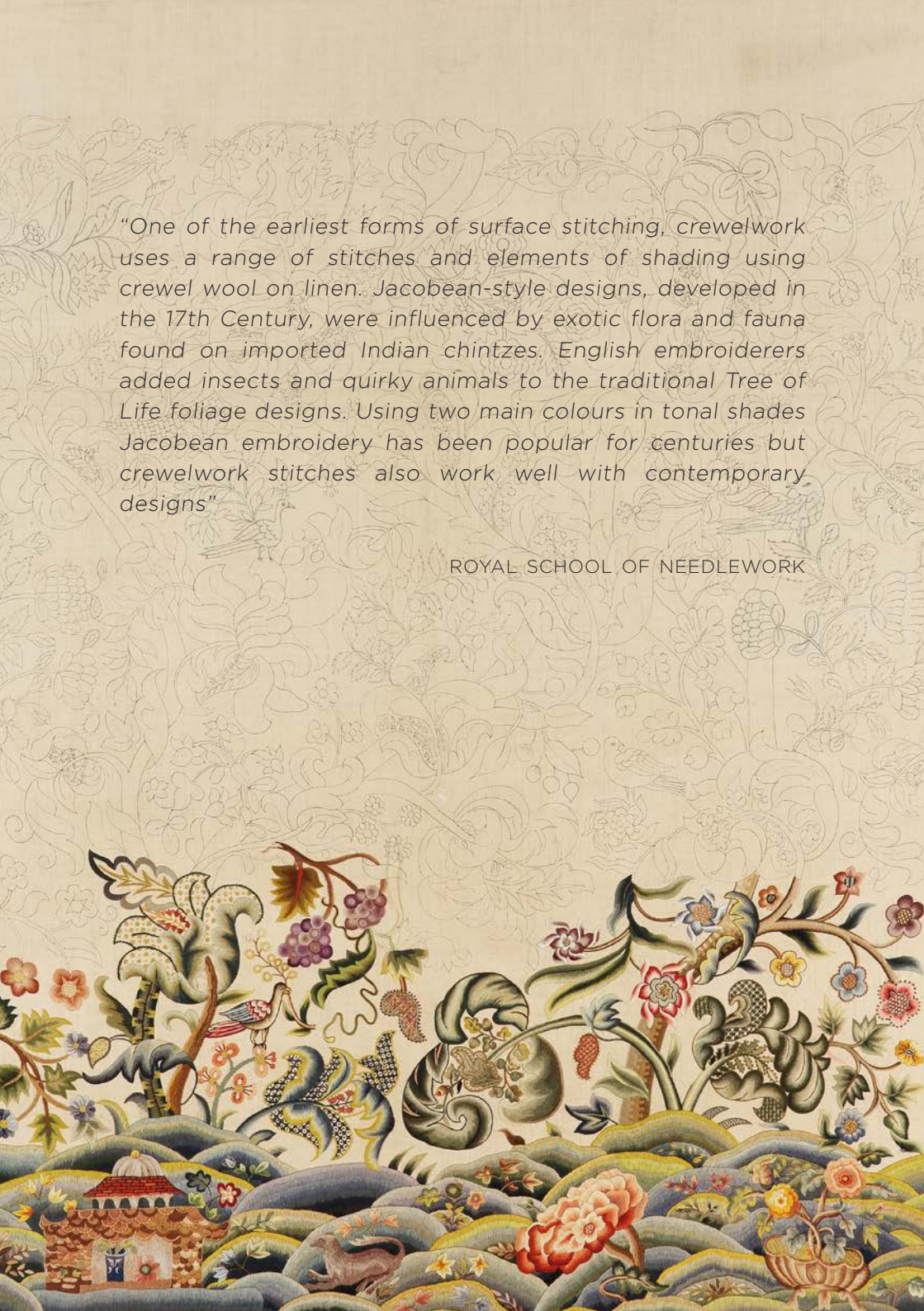
MASTERPIECE 2017



Once again Rose Uniacke is pleased to be bringing a carefully chosen selection to Masterpiece 2017.

We look forward to seeing you at stand B8.

PREVIOUS PAGE:
LARGE CREWELWORK TAPESTRY,
BY THE LADIES WORK SOCIETY



"One of the earliest forms of surface stitching, crewelwork uses a range of stitches and elements of shading using crewel wool on linen. Jacobean-style designs, developed in the 17th Century, were influenced by exotic flora and fauna found on imported Indian chintzes. English embroiderers added insects and quirky animals to the traditional Tree of Life foliage designs. Using two main colours in tonal shades Jacobean embroidery has been popular for centuries but crewelwork stitches also work well with contemporary designs"

ROYAL SCHOOL OF NEEDLEWORK

LARGE CREWELWORK TAPESTRY BY THE LADIES WORK SOCIETY

ENGLAND, MID 20TH CENTURY

DIMENSIONS:

H: 174cm

W: 147cm

£10,000

Partly-worked embroidered panel with unfinished, inked design in Appleton crewelwool on linen, with a pattern of interlacing flora & fauna, incorporating exotic birds, above a border of undulating ground, with a Chinese pavilion and running hound.

Within the Victoria & Albert Museum there is a 17th Century Crewelwork Hanging from which the Ladies' Work Society may have copied the design for this piece. Museum number: 1390-1904.

Clearly a creative interpretation of the aforementioned work, the main compositional elements are all used but technically there is evidence of skilled, flamboyant stitching with traditional counted stitched techniques and a deliberate yarn contrast to the background. Exceptional needlework skill can also be seen in the use of shading and the delicate naturalistic modeling.



One of the more interesting compositional differences involves the hound who is depicted with the same dragon-like tail but without the spots of the cheetah who can be seen hunting a stag beyond the pavilion in the 17th Century work. This only adds to the intriguing visual story, where preparatory sketching drops into a section of semi-completion then solidifies into a fully finished lower section, making for a stunning display of skilled embroidery and technical process.



GEORGE III SOFA RETAINING ITS ORIGINAL PAINTWORK & COMPANION SET OF FOUR ARMCHAIRS

ENGLISH, 18TH CENTURY

DIMENSIONS:

H: 88cm

W: 46cm

D: 53.5cm

£32,000

A late 18th Century breakfront ebonised, lined and decorated sofa with buttoned squab cushion, with a light and delicately realised neo-classicism typical of Sheraton's graceful forms. Retaining original decoration.

Japanned in black with gold rosettes sunbeams or fans, a decorative motif typical of Sheraton (see image of a Bookcase with Secretaire, from 'Cabinet & Upholster's Drawing Book' 1793) - "the pediment is simply a segment of a circle and can be cut in the form of a fan"

The corresponding set of four armchairs, japanned with rosette, sunbeam or fan top rail pediment decoration including central urn with swags, the rectangular backs leading into curving arms, with buttoned seat squab cushions above tapering legs.





RIGHT:
SOFA DETAIL



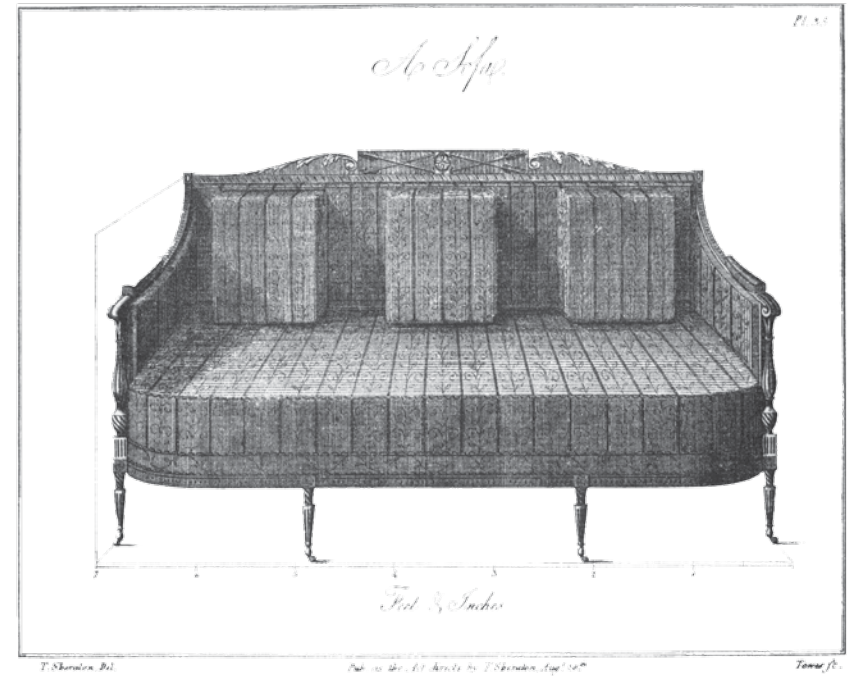


The arms all rest upon pillars, a style quite characteristic of Sheraton, while the legs are all tapering and plainly turned, not reeded. Sheraton was also the exponent of the square back, based on straight lines and squared corners, and as with the chairs in particular, a rectangular frame holds four slender uprights (Sheraton never goes beyond five) with a top rail broken by a raised central portion, the arms high up on the back allowing them to sweep down with an easy curve, all typical compositional elements of his work.

The Archery iconography used on the sofa has interesting period resonance. The Royal Toxophilite Society was founded in 1781 by Sir Ashton Lever with the Prince of Wales, the future King George IV as its patron. Archery had fallen into decline during the Puritanism that followed Cromwell's reign. However it had a saviour in George IV who as Prince of Wales and as King was a keen Archer, reviving the sport once more in England. King George IV was also the patron of the Royal Kentish Bowmen and Royal British Bowmen.

This royal seal of approval undoubtedly gave added impetus to the popularity of archery. His presentation of trophies to these societies and occasional presence gave added cachet to the sport. The King laid down the basis of modern archery as far as target colours and points and York rounds were concerned. Sheraton himself was also alive to the aesthetic possibilities of the arrow, which contains strong clear lines and diagonals, and includes the motif in a sofa design.

Often regarded as the last of the Golden Age of 18th Century English Designers, it is more for Sheraton's drawings and books that his fame chiefly rests, since his actual cabinet-making output was very small and from 1793 onwards he seems to have stopped this side of the business completely. It is doubtful that he ever executed many of his designs and that most of the furniture attributed to him was built and interpreted by others after the drawings in his books. As he explains, the designs were a guide and were open to the skill levels and subsequent interpretations of those reading and working from them. As he says on page 318 "if the top rail be thought to have too much work it can be finished in a straight line" an idea which seems to have been taken on board by the makers of the suite.





PAIR OF BRASS AND WROUGHT
IRON SCONCES

ATTRIBUTED TO ERNEST GIMSON (1864 - 1919)

BLACKSMITHING PROBABLY BY ALFRED
BUCKNALL

SAPPERTON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, CIRCA 1910

DIMENSIONS:

H: 29.5cm

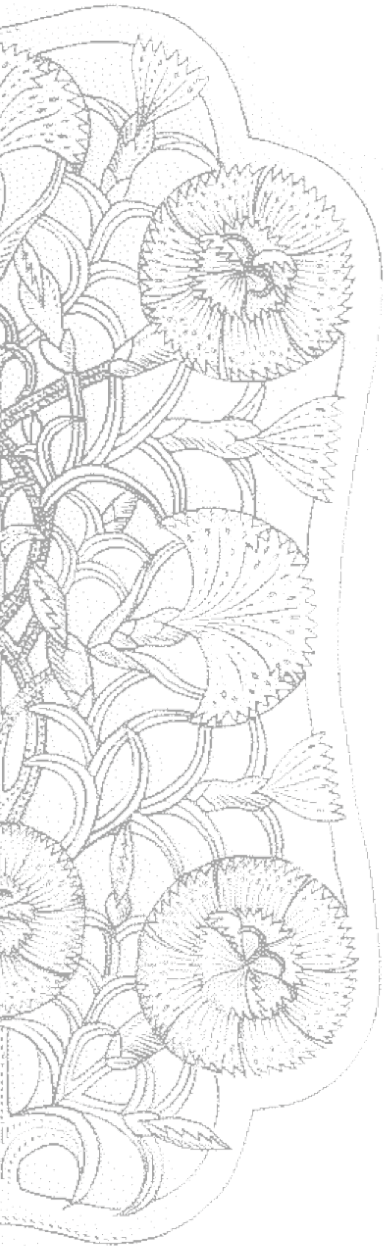
W: 45cm

£14,000

The backplate pierced and worked in low relief with flowers and foliage, with two polished iron arms with tight scroll terminals, the shallow domed drip pan and sconce with serrated edge. Unsigned.

The privately printed 'Ernest Gimson, His Life & Work' (1924) illustrates a number of Gimson's drawings for piercing and chasework. Plates 40 to 45 are all illustrations and photographs of remarkably similar designs for both fire-dogs and sconces; none match the offered diamond-shaped backplate. Within the notes on these plates we learn quite what a hands-on designer-maker he was...





"... (that) none of the blacksmiths had had, before he engaged them, any special training for the highly skilled work required in much that was produced. Frequent technical difficulties had to be overcome, as well as the determining of the right finish for each piece. A great deal of his time was consequently spent in the shops, which he visited almost every day."

A comparable pair of sconces were sold at Bonhams and catalogued as being a posthumous manufacture to a Gimson design by HW Keil on his departure from Gordon Russell's workshops. Furthermore, there are a number of Gordon Russell designs that can be seen to sit in the same sphere of influence as our offered pair. Design 135, dated June 1924, by Russell is for a round-backed '2 Light Wall Sconce' and Design 379, of the following year, is for a hexagonal backed 'Pinetree' sconce. The working of these is more directly modeled from Russell's drawings, capable but with less of the artist's hand at work as seen in the offered earlier Bucknall made examples.



A PAIR OF SILVER-PLATED & CUT-GLASS MIRRORS

ATTRIBUTED TO FRANCIS SKIDMORE

DIMENSIONS:

H: 102cm

W: 69cm

£26,000

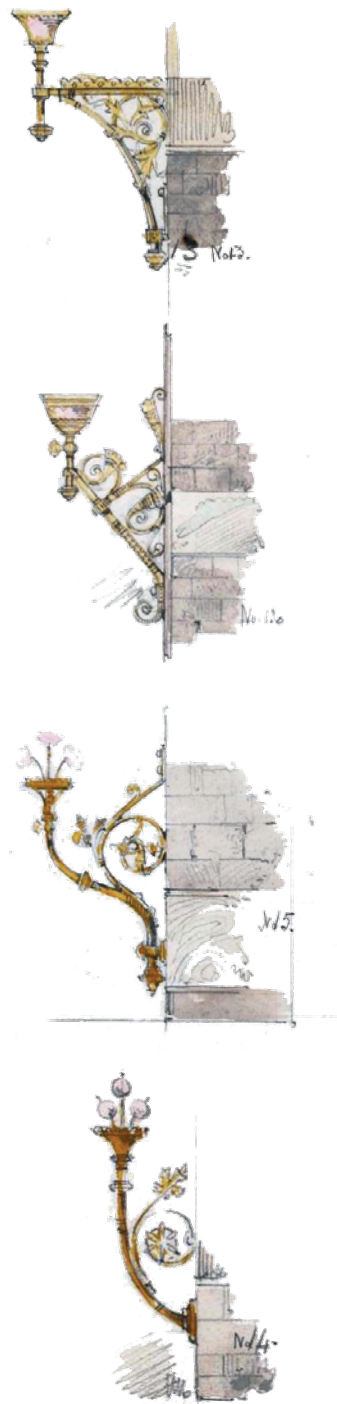
Of portrait rectangular form, with silvered electrotyped base frame with raised mirror border and rounded corners inset with stylized and clasped cabuchons of cut-glass resembling floral discs, the top rail decorated with a foliate crest including further flowers, leaves and creepers, with original shaped mirror plate. On the reverse wooden backing is a hand-written inscription of partially decipherable text including a date of 23 Feb 1863 - it appears to be a person's name, followed by a location, then the word fixed followed by the above date... "*Geo. Culverwell. Isle of Wight...*"

The chosen flowers and floriography would appear to all come from the Composite Family, otherwise known as the sunflower or daisy family. During the Victorian Era, floriography became commonly used to express symbolic messages that Victorian etiquette deemed unacceptable to share openly, such as the exchange of emotions in public. The gifts most exchanged during social engagements in the Victorian Era were often flowers and careful consideration was given to the intended message and metaphor.



The pair were probably privately commissioned as a wedding gift, being both a 'couple' and the flowers representing adoration, loyalty and longevity - the foundations of wedlock. A similar use of the floral cabochon motif can be seen in the William Burges Brooch at the V&A, made in 1864 as a marriage gift to the distinguished architect John Pollard Seddon.

Skidmore's early commissions were often ecclesiastical and foremented his early Gothic Revival aesthetic, as was being promoted by the Church during the Victorian era. As his reputation grew he started his own factory at Alma Street and from the 1860s onwards his work was sent around the globe. With increasing growth and industrial capacity he moved into the domestic market and began producing items of furniture and objects of everyday use, such as light fittings, chairs and quite probably the above mentioned mirrors. The hand-written date from the 1860s would also correctly correlate to this production period. Equally, one can see on the back of the mirrors hand-stamped numbers for the component parts, indicating production systems for volume-based output but still carrying the technical charms indicative of the 19th century.



During this period Skidmore was also using a lot of electrotyping, a relatively new technique of coating base metal with silver (seen here) or gold. Equally, the stylised imagery used on the mirrors is inspired not only from his earlier ecclesiastical work but is now paired down with a gentler secular force, an aesthetic open to the growing middle classes and botanical beauty and naturalism of the Aesthetic Movement and soon to be Art Nouveau. A design sketch at the V&A from about 1865-1872 for brackets for gas lighting show a very similar use of the clasped cabuchons and leaves, particularly in sketches No.2 & 11.

Stylistically the mirrors stand between the heavier Gothic Revival of Skidmore's past and the lighter naturalism and fluidity of Art Nouveau, a style that would begin to dominate his designs towards the end of the Century.

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O139875/design-skidmore-francis-alexander/>





A WALNUT & WROUGHT-IRON TRESTLE TABLE

SOUTHERN SPAIN, EARLY 17TH CENTURY

DIMENSIONS:

H: 83cm

W: 172.5cm

D: 94cm

£32,000

The top formed as two wide walnut boards with cleated ends; old marks and scars throughout with one heavily worn corner surface. The trestle supports, linked by two wrought iron stretchers with decorative turnings and flattened foliate flourishes to the bottom ends. Each trestle with leaf carved outer edges and scrolling feet, the cross bars with stylised arabesques.

A rare survival, displaying the battle scars of the past 400 years, unusual as these tables are often nineteenth century and made from earlier elements. This double plank trestle table may originally have supported a Vargueño; a desk cabinet with fall-front containing brightly decorated combinations of drawers.

The quality of walnut, with its aged depth of colour, the accomplished design and the capable old restoration to the feet shows that this is a piece that has been appreciated through the years.



Interestingly, there is an area to one corner of the top that has seen repeated wear, creating a dished, textured scar suggesting its use as a scribe or apothecaries' working desk.

The Metropolitan Museum holds a table in their collection with a similar carving to the fronts of the legs and straight iron supports, formerly in the collection of George Blumenthal; see accession number 41.100.299.

Sotheby's 2006 Haute Epoque sale saw another variant of this trestle table - again with the carvings to the fronts of the legs & straight iron supports - with the addition of the Aguilar de la Frontera coat of arm. It seems reasonable to suggest that the carved decorations of these tables are an Andalusian motif derived from the Nasrid dynasty who ruled Granada and the 'el-Andalus' territories during the 13th to the 15th centuries.



PAIR OF LATE 18TH CENTURY BRASS LANTERN BRACKETS

ATTRIBUTED TO WILLIAM PARKER & SON

DIMENSIONS:

H: 117cm

W: 33.5cm

D: 63.5cm

£12,500

The cylindrical bowl-shaped glass shades with acorn finial and single candle sconce, with scrolling three arm gilt brass supporting arms hanging from chain, suspended from the curving beak of a stylised Eagle's head that rises from a sabre scabbard body with three suspension bands into a feathered tail section and curves again into the projected wall fitting. Glass shades replaced.

The eagle heads, along with the scrolling branch and acanthus details bear significant resemblance to those found on a pair of George III Twin Branch Candelabra from the Ducal Gallery in the Chapel at Chatsworth, circa 1780.

The bracket cast appears to have been based on a Napoleonic era curved sabre scabbard with exaggerated suspension bands, minus the harness rings. Such martial symbolism would have resonated with imperial power and regimental rank, of victorious campaigns abroad and Empire.





AN EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY SARCOPHAGUS IN THE ANTIQUÉ MANNER

ENGLISH, CIRCA 1800 - 1810

PROVENANCE: PITZHANGER MANOR, EALING

DIMENSIONS:

H: 61cm

W: 81.5cm

L: 201cm

£55,000

Of ancient lenos form, each side and end with a large-scale lions head mask within hanging ring; the upper and lower section ringed with a simple square section moulding. The surface retains its original crusty stone-white painted finish and is now fitted as a bath with a copper liner.

"The lenos, a tub-shaped sarcophagus resembling a trough for pressing grapes, was a late second-century AD development, and often featured two projecting lion's head spouts on the front. Most western Roman sarcophagi were placed inside mausolea against a wall or in a niche, and were therefore only decorated on the front and two short sides. A large number are carved with garlands of fruit and leaves, evoking the actual garlands frequently used to decorate tombs and altars."

(Heather T. Awan, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

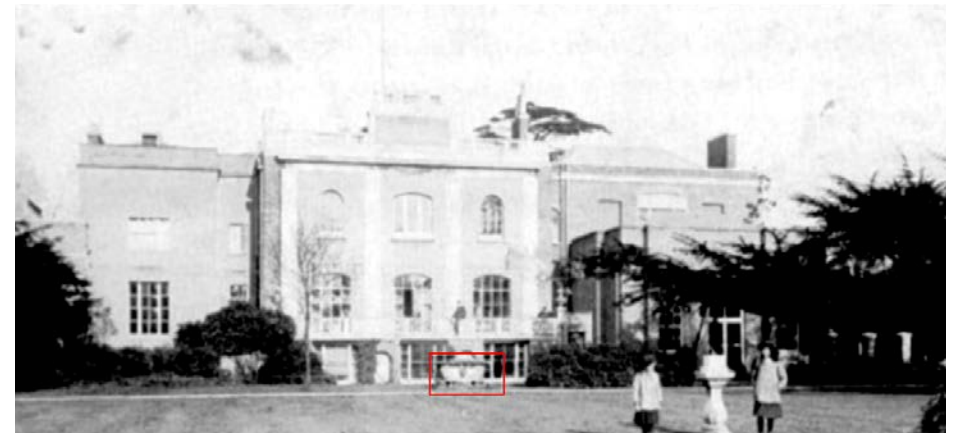


AERIAL VIEW OF PITZHANGER MANOR.
C.J. RICHARDSON, 1832.

Bought directly from Ealing Council, the Sarcophagus stood on the garden front at Pitzhanger Manor from at least the late Nineteenth century. With the house changing ownership a number of times during the century, we are only able to surmise at the sarcophagus' origins; that said, Soane continued a long 'affair' with the building and his 'pleasure grounds.'

In 1795, John Haverfield Junior left the Royal Gardens at Kew and went into practice as a landscape designer, one of his clients being Sir John Soane for whom he remodelled the gardens at Pitzhanger Manor in Ealing from c.1801. Haverfield and Soane clearly worked closely on these Regency pleasure gardens and we see much of Soane's classical inspiration still. There remains a Grade II* listed triple arched bridge to the north of the (now replaced) serpentine lake, surfaced with knapped flints and stone fragments; the original Coadestone finials were removed in the early 20th century. Also in the same area of the gardens is a Portland stone bench with carved central mask, swags and scallops. Both these are known to have been designed by Soane for the gardens and display classical motifs.

An element of Soane's redesigned park & gardens, was a capriccio of ancient ruins built at the Northern wing of the house. The location was such that a visitor would enter the park through the 'triumphal arch' gated entrance at the North-East and sweep round due West to the front of the house, glimpsing the ruins through existing trees thinned by Mr. Haverfield. These ruins were removed immediately by General Cameron who bought the estate in 1810. Virginia Brilliant & Matilda Burn wrote the following description for the Soane Museum in 1998/2010:





The grounds are referred to by Soane as 'pleasure grounds' and the construction of the mock ruins in the estate grounds certainly had some function for the amusement of guests. In his new position of professional and social standing, it was very important to Soane that his house should advertise his status and intellectual qualities to friends and clients who visited. Therefore, although small in scale, Pitzhanger is made to convey a sense of grandeur to the viewer, particularly through its porticoed entrance, classical references and manipulation of scale both internally and externally.

The Brilliant/Burn catalogue for the Soane Museum makes brief mention of an article written by Sir John Summerson (curator of the Soane museum between 1945 - 1984) for The Architectural Review in March 1978. Titled 'John Soane and the Furniture of Death' we discover that...

"the mausoleum, the sarcophagus and the cinerary urn... (became)...objects of reference of increasing importance to Soane as a designer... and when we come to his country house, Pitzhanger (sic) Manor, Ealing, built in 1800, we see that the classical furniture of death was indeed taking hold of his imagination."

Summerson references motif after motif throughout the house - gate piers are noted as of "markedly funeral character," we see the "lid of a cinerary urn," "scrolled acroterium... often found on the sides or ends of antique sarcophagi." Within the house these motifs are again noted and he draws us to look at JM Gandy's period watercolour sketches, showing rooms decorated in the style of a Roman villa. Soane possessed drawings of excavations that had taken place in 1777. He also states that:

"Soane had been buying such things (cinerary urns & vases), evidently with an eye to Pitzhanger. The Cawdor sale in 1800, the Bessborough and Duke of St Albans sales in 1801, the Clerk and Mendip sales in 1802 provided nearly all. In Gandy's drawing the great Cawdor vase stands on its own pedestal opposite the fireplace."



Whilst Pitzhanger's ownership under Sir John Soane is well documented, the years under its subsequent ownership are barely registered. Soane's sale of Pitzhanger - brought about by his wife's declining health and the failure of his sons to live up to his expectations - to General Neville Cameron went through in 1811. The house changed hands a number of times before 1843 when Spencer Percival bought the house and installed his four sisters-in-law. Few changes were made during this period, though it is noted that the sisters bought some statuary from their previous property at Elm Grove.

The offered Sarcophagus, whilst its age dates to the period of Soane's extensive works at Pitzhanger, cannot be firmly attributed to him as designer or commissioner. However, his universally recognised influence on British design, his deep rooted knowledge of Antiquity and the importance of the house built in Ealing can unfailingly have influenced its positioning on the garden front at Pitzhanger.



PAIR OF ART DECO 'SEA SHELL' WALL LIGHTS

FRANCE, CIRCA 1940's

DIMENSIONS:

H: 36cm

W: 36cm

D: 25.2cm

£7,500

Of stylised seashell form, the delicately cast plaster with a gently aged surface patina and still retaining the original internal glass reflector shades.

These could be attributed to any of the top-flight designers working in France during the 30's and 40's. Plaster was never viewed as the poor relation in early 20th century design, with everyone from the Giacometti, who used the material as a maquette building medium to Serge Roche, Emilio Terry and Jean-Charles Moreux who employed it within many of their interiors projects.

In multiple projects Jean-Michel Frank - perhaps the most fêted of Interior Designers working at that time - can be seen using organic shapes in plaster as wall lights, table lamps & decoration, whilst his shop on Rue Faubourg Saint-Honoré retailed works in the medium.



PH 6/5 COPPER LANTERN BY POUL HENNINGSEN

STAMPED PH6/PATENTED
PH 6/5 COPPER LANTERN
BY POUL HENNINGSEN (1894 - 1967)

DIMENSIONS:

H: 45cm
D: 60cm

£34,500

With graduating copper 3-shade form beneath a copper canopy and support chain. This shade combination is designed to create warm light for the home.

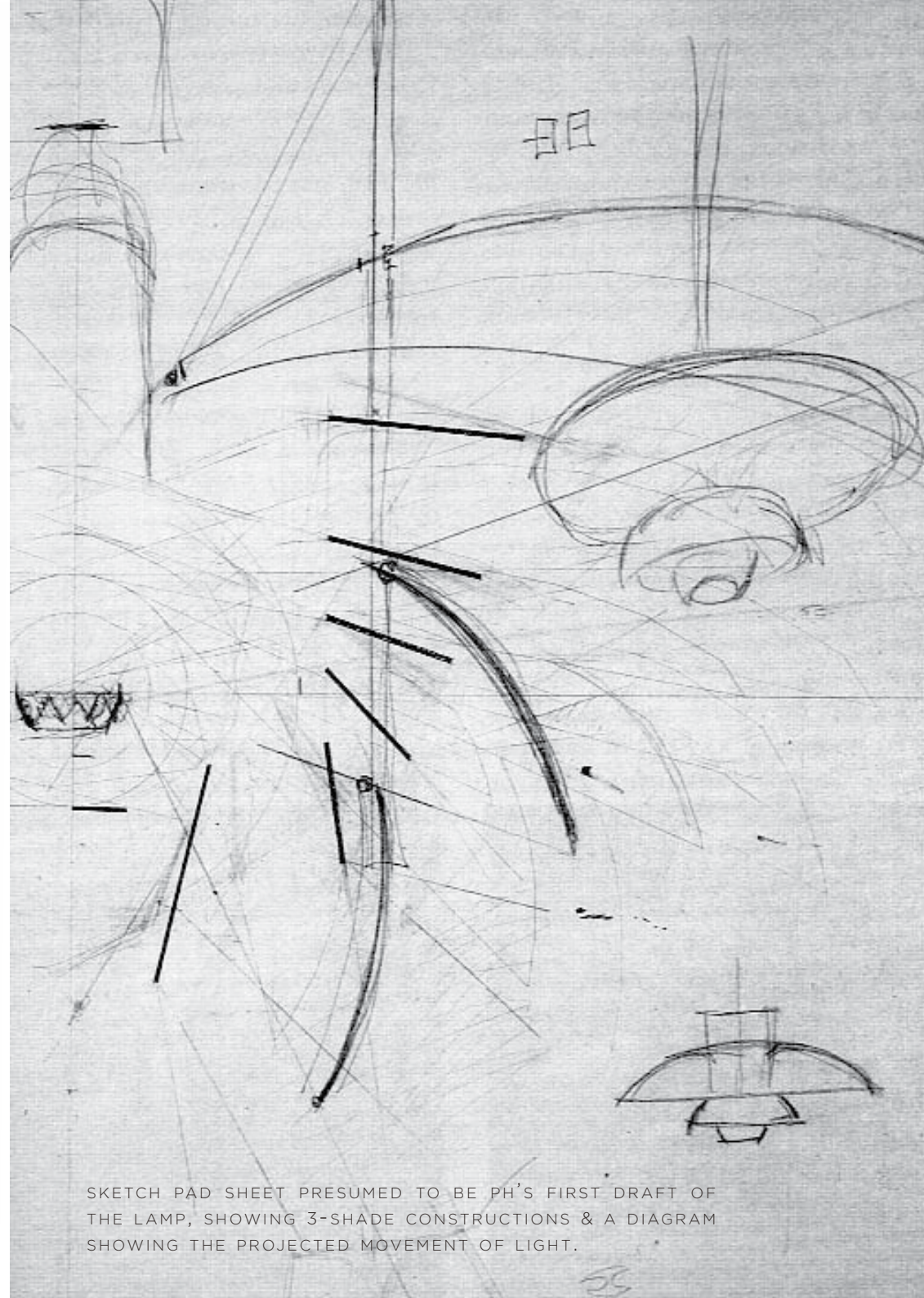
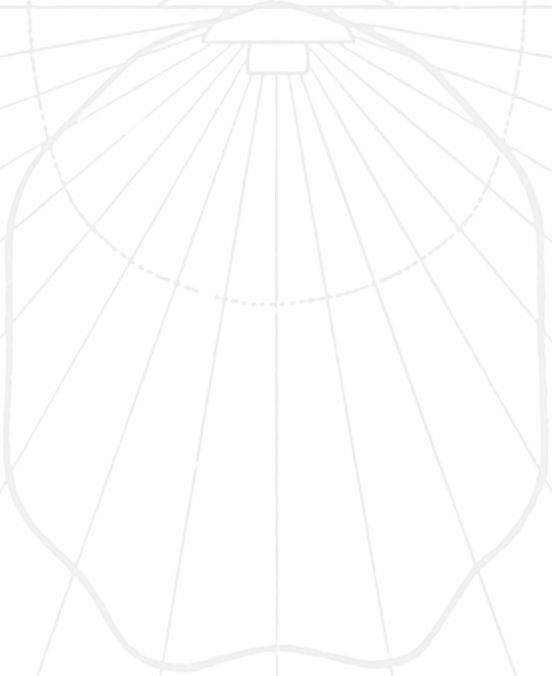
Manufactured by Louis Poulsen, Denmark, circa 1926 - 1928.

One of the many theories behind Henningsen's 'graduating' shade system was that light from the source should never be visible to the viewer. By layering the shades in varying positions and using the warm colour of the copper underside (as opposed to the cold glare of white enamel), the lantern's light is spread and warmed whilst obscuring the bulb.

The light source is thus visibly softened to a glow, similar to that of an oil lamp and becomes glare-free, ideal for domestic use.



'PH' was a Danish architect who was also involved in writing political literature and cinema. His main passion however, was for lighting. During his career he designed a number of remarkable buildings and pieces of furniture, but most notably, he created over 100 innovative lighting designs in conjunction with Louis Poulsen & Co.



SKETCH PAD SHEET PRESUMED TO BE PH'S FIRST DRAFT OF THE LAMP, SHOWING 3-SHADE CONSTRUCTIONS & A DIAGRAM SHOWING THE PROJECTED MOVEMENT OF LIGHT.



A CARRARA MARBLE LION MASK

15TH CENTURY ITALIAN OR EARLIER

FLORENTINE OR VENETIAN

DIMENSIONS:

H: 30.5cm

W: 38.5cm

D: 20.5cm

£24,000

Of smooth and coloured Tuscan Carrara Marble, the Lion's head surrounded by exaggerated volumes of luxuriant hair that depict the mane, with deeply sculpted curls that frame a bestial face with grandiose whiskers, with a hollow throat, filled by teeth and fangs, that suggests previous use as a fountain or conduit for water

Leonine imagery was prolific in late medieval and Renaissance Italy and the mask could have come from any number of possible locations. The winged Lion was the symbol of Venice, representing Saint Mark, the patron saint of the City State, while there is also a lion known as Marzocco (possibly derived from Mars, the god of war) used as a symbol of Florence. The Florentine symbolic repertoire constantly references the Lion, from the Royal Angevin Lions of the 14th Century to the 16th Century Medici Lions of Pope Leo X (Loggia dei Leoni). The animal even has a long and elaborate history as a resident of the city.

The same period also saw great innovations in the use of sculpture in public spaces. Perhaps fed from a cistern above, the mask would pipe channelled water to fall clear of a wall or fountain, probably into a basin below. The posture of the Lion also indicates a raised position and an elementary understanding of perspective, as the mask is meant to be seen from below

The crude realisation of the hair and facial features, along with the sculpted perspective, would possibly indicate a late medieval time frame, not having the later sophistication as seen in the 16th century Medici Lions. Much of the inspiration for such art was based on the remains of Antiquity, such as the Piraeus Lion of Venice, formerly from Ancient Greece and often from the portraiture on coins and medals, where the curled hair shows an interest in elaborate patterning that was typical of Renaissance art and Leonardo in particular.



As to the masks removal from its original position, unless of classical origin, public sculpture, once suitably weathered or stylistically outdated, was often not considered worth keeping and would be replaced, the originals disappearing into private collections or latterly into foreign hands, most prominently the British on the Grand Tour.

15th Century Italian or earlier - possibly Florentine or Venetian. In the opinion of Experts at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



NOTES

