MACASSAR EBONY REVOLVING BOOKCASE

£3,500

Code: 7223

A rectangular stepped topped bookcase in macassar ebony with opposed openings on a square base, the whole able to rotate, terminating in bun feet.

Probably French, circa 1960

The revolving bookcase first appeared in around 544 in Imperial China accredited to Fu Xi. Known as Zhuanluntang these were adopted extensively in the 8-9th century by the Buddhist monasteries during the reign of Emperor Taizu.

In its more recent recognisable form, the small revolving bookcase reappeared as a staple of British and Continental furniture design in around 1765. Early designs can be seen in the works of Thomas Chippendale constructed in expressive and elaborate Chinese lacquer work with Kentian gilded lion paw feet. The bookcases were often in
the round and fixed, but introduced the concept of a small, semi portable corner bookcase to the home.

As English furniture design simplified towards the late 18th century and into the Regency period so the design morphed into the now familiar square form on a rotating base. Gone are the fripperies of gilding and lacquer work to be replaced by a highly polished and figured wood, either mahogany, walnut or ebony, often accentuated with ormolu mounts or galleries.

Our mid 20th century example could have been made in the 1820’s so similar are the design cues. Rich ebony, prized for its finely textured grain and mirror finish when polish accentuates the simplistic form of this beautiful, yet functional piece.

Dimensions:
H 80cm x W 40cm x D 40cm
H 31.51" x W 15¾" x D 15¾"