

PATRICK JEFFERSON



Item	A <i>PIETRE DURE</i> TOP ATTRIBUTED TO GIACOMO RAFFAELLI ON AN EBONY BASE
Date	The inlaid marble top <i>circa</i> 1820-30; the Sinhalese ebony base of a similar date.
Provenance	By repute, a private Parisian collection.
Dimensions	Height 28" (71cm) Top 20" (51cm)
Description	<p>Throughout the 18th century there was an insatiable demand for Italian inlaid marble table-tops assembled from ancient fragments, thus perpetuating the link with antiquity that was the quintessence of the Grand Tour. These were easily transportable and invariably mounted back in England on mahogany, gilded or rosewood table bases², so it is extremely rare to see one carved from solid jet-black <i>Diospyros</i> ebony, the celebrated timber found and worked in Ceylon and Southern India. It follows designs published in Regency pattern books such as <i>The Practical Cabinet-Maker</i>, 1827, by Peter and Michael Angelo Nicholson, who note 'the tops of tables are often ornamented with beautiful mosaic work'. This outstanding example is inlaid in <i>trompe l'oeil</i> around a radial geometric pattern of 128 specimen marbles & rare hardstones including porphyry, agates, alabaster, malachite and lapis lazuli. While there were several lapidary workshops capable of of this exemplary quality, including Michelangelo Barberi and Alfonso Cavamelli, the form and detailing³ supports an attribution to the most celebrated mosaicist working in Rome, Giacomo Raffaelli (1753-1836), whose illustrious clients included Napoleon, many of the crowned heads of Europe, and Russian nobility including Baron Demidoff & Countess Orloff. Interestingly the central tablet of labradorite, an orthoclase feldspar with iridescence resembling a butterfly wing that was favoured by Raffaelli, may indicate a Russian patron as it is found in the Urals. Raffaelli's mosaics may be seen in the Gilbert Collection, The Hermitage, Syon House, Château de Fontainebleau, the Fitzwilliam and Temple Newsam.</p>
Price	£35,000

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Fig. 1



Fig.2

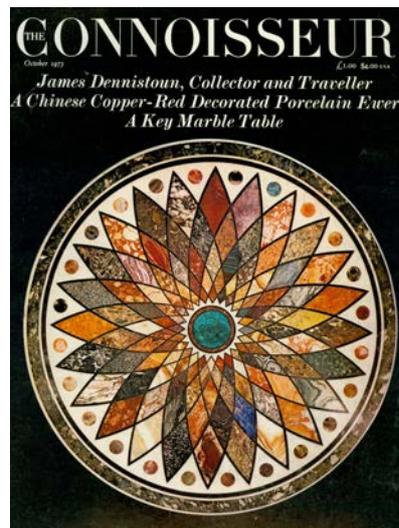


Fig.3