

FOSTER & GANE

A unique mahogany glazed cabinet by Sir Ambrose Heal (1872-1959)

£10,800



REF: 5372

Height: 181 cm (71.3")

Width: 150 cm (59.1")

Depth: 42 cm (16.5")

Description

The lower two door cabinet flanked with angled cupboards, below a two door glazed upper section, with an exaggerated overhanging wide cornice with gilded 'corbels'. The interior of the lower central cupboard doors with tooled, red leather and gilded panels, one with the date 1895 and the other with the initials for Alice Rose, Ambrose Heal's wife.

Provenance: Sir Ambrose Heal (1872-1959) Made to celebrate his marriage and dated 1895.

England, 1895

Sir Ambrose Heal (1872 - 1959), great-grandson of John Harris Heal who founded the furniture company Heal & Son, entered the family business in 1893 having served a two-year apprenticeship with James Plucknett & Co. Art Furniture Manufacturers of Warwick. Inspired by the likes of John Ruskin and William Morris, A.H. sought to produce high-standard furniture in both design and quality, reflecting the latest thinking of the Arts & Crafts movement. Given the economic realities of Britain's broad middle-class public, as well as the commercial interests of the company, however, A.H. was committed to mechanical production by the modern factory methods rejected by the Arts & Crafts movement. He designed his furniture accordingly, finding the simple construction and plain ornamentation integral to the Arts & Crafts movement suited to mass production methods, allowing him to maintain a high standard of craftsmanship in both material and manufacture.

This mahogany cabinet was made to celebrate A.H.'s marriage to his first wife Alice Rose Rippingille, featuring initials A.R.H. and a tooled red leather 1895 date panel - the same year A.H. began designing furniture. A.H. likely commissioned wholesale manufacturer J.S. Henry to produce this cabinet, making it one of the earliest examples of A.H.'s design philosophy.

The inset tooled panels to the inside doors may well have originally appeared on the outside of the cabinet, only to be transferred to the inside after Alice's death as a mark of respect.

Literature: Oliver S Heal, Sir Ambrose Heal and the Heal Cabinet Factory 1897-1939, page 148 this cabinet illustrated.