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A Rare Pair of Regency Armchairs Attributed to Morel and Hughes

REF963

Height: 34 in (86 cm)

Width: 26 in (66 cm)

Depth: 31 ½ in (80 cm)

Each with curved back and scrolled arms terminating in rams heads with anthemion raised upon sabre legs and mounted with gilt paterae.

PROVENANCE

Algernon Charles Swinburne

Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, April 19th -20th, Works of Art, Furniture, including Writing Tables used by A.C Swinburne and George Elliot.

Illustrated:

Country Life, April 7th 1932, Swinburne's house, The Pines, Putney

£ 68000

DESCRIPTION

This pair of armchairs in the French neoclassical style is most probably from the workshop of Morel and Hughes. The use of ram's head terminals is very similar to two other examples by the above makers: the first supplied to the 1st Earl of Bradford for Weston Park, Staffordshire, between 1806-1807 and the other supplied to the 13th Earl of Clanricarde or possibly his son, the 1st Marquess of Clanricarde and then by descent to the Earls of Harewood. The suite was eventually situated at Chesterfield House, Mayfair. The Harewoods themselves were also great patrons of Morel and Hughes.

Nicholas Morel and Robert Hughes established their workshop on 13 Great Marlborough Street, London, in 1805, each of them a highly skilled and successful cabinetmaker in his own right. Morel, for example, had worked on the decoration of the Prince of Wales's Carlton House under the direction of the architect Henry Holland and had also supplied furnishings for the Prince's hunting box at The Grange, Hampshire. Morel and Hughes continued to make furniture for the Prince, later George IV, as well as for the Dukes of Buccleuch, Northumberland, Bedford and the Earl of Mansfield. The partnership between Morel and Hughes was dissolved in 1827 when Nicholas Morel formed a new partnership with George Seddon. This probably came about for the practical reasons of Morel having been appointed to furnish the new royal apartments at Windsor Castle and Seddon being the only one with a workshop large enough to cope with this immense commission.

Algernon Charles Swinburne was born into a wealthy Northumbrian family in London, England in 1837. He was educated at Eton College and at Balliol College, Oxford, but did not complete a degree. Swinburne was one of the most accomplished lyric poets of the Victorian era and was a preeminent symbol of rebellion against the conservative values of his time. His books include *Poems and Ballads, Second Series* (1878), *Songs Before Sunrise* (1871), *Poems and Ballads* (1866), *Chastelard* (1865), *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), and *The Queen-Mother and Rosamond* (1860).

Swinburne lived at The Pines, Putney with poetry critic, Theodore Watts-Dunton and he acquired a diverse collection of antiques throughout his life, which were sold at Sotheby's in 1923. The pair can be seen photographed in situ in his House before the sale.