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A George II Period Mahogany Gainsborough Armchair, Attributed to Paul Saunders

REF1138

A Fine and Rare George II Period Mahogany Gainsborough Armchair

English, circa. 1755

Attributed to Paul Saunders

The upholstered back with serpentine top rail, over the similarly shaped seat, now upholstered in blue / grey silk damask. The padded armrests supported on finely carved scrolled arms. The show wood rails carved with scrolls, trelliswork and acanthus. The cabriole legs similarly decorated with acanthus leaves and cabochons, terminating in scrolled feet with recessed castors.

Height: 38 1/2 inches (98cm), Width: 30 inches (76 cm), Depth: 26 1/2 inches (67.6 cm)

PROVENANCE

So far only one other chair of this model has been discovered and was part of the highly important collection of Gerald Hochschild, sold by Sotheby's London, 1 December 1978, lot 38. And subsequently with Mallett and Sons Antiques.

Moss Harris, London, England

Private collection, England

£ 54000

LITERATURE

Moss Harris, A catalogue and Index of Old Furniture and works of Decorative Art, Volume 2 , p 204.
(Full page Image)

L. Synge, Mallett's Great English Furniture, London, 1991, p. 123, fig. 138 (illustrated behind the Chippendale Combe Abbey desk)

DESCRIPTION

This chair is an outstanding example of English cabinetmaking in the mid 18th century. The exquisite craftsmanship allowing for the full expression of its design, which is beautifully carved from the highest quality mahogany. Given the remarkable condition and bold stature of this chair, we expect it was part of an important commission and is therefore, a rare survival in today's market.

Paul Saunders furniture maker (1722 – 1771)

Paul Saunders was one of the leading suppliers of fashionable upholstered furniture in the 1750s and 1760s and served as Tapestry Maker to George III from 1757. Around 1751 he formed a partnership with George Smith Bradshaw and possibly Bradshaw's brother William, who were already well established with an impressive clientele. Operating from Carlisle House, Soho Square and 59 Greek Street, Saunders built a substantial workshop employing up to 37 craftsmen. Although primarily upholsterers and cabinetmakers, the firm also produced tapestries for Holkham and Petworth. Saunders enjoyed the patronage of prominent clients across London and the country: early in the partnership he worked at Mansion House and from 1755–58, at Holkham for the 1st Earl of Leicester. He appears to have served the Earl and Countess of Egremont at Petworth for nearly two decades from 1748, and from 1765 until his death in 1771 he undertook commissions for the Duke of Bedford at Woburn and Bedford House in London. From 1765 he also worked at Audley End, Essex, for Sir John Griffin Griffin, where cabinetmakers John Gordon and Richard Taitt were later employed.