

13 Rolls of Historic Art Nouveau Panoramic Wallpaper.

Art Nouveau, an art movement that came to prominence at the turn of the 20th century, is characterized by its blending of fine and applied art forms, bringing an air of sophistication to objects used and seen in everyday life. By democratizing fine design, it brought the forms of the museum into the lives of everyday citizens.

Michaan's Auctions is proud to offer an incredible example of this democratized design, **13 Rolls of Historic Art Nouveau Panoramic Wallpaper** (\$5/8,000) for sale in our April Gallery Auction, held on Friday, April 19th.

The wallpaper consists of thirteen panels, each around seven feet in height, and together totaling twenty-



one foot wide. The wallpaper represents a panorama that originally depicts the four seasons, although this lot is limited to the three seasons spring, summer, and autumn. The panorama is unified by a singular color scheme and formal style, which uses Art Nouveau conventions such as outlines, floral elements, and bright colors to create an inviting and enjoyable environment. The spring season is pictured at the top and constitutes the left side of the original panorama. It features a collection of three women, as well as two young and a teenage girl who pick flowers and sit in chairs amongst the well-manicured garden and vast sky made orange by an intense sunset. The summer panels feature plants that have grown taller, with numerous blooming flowers and three women who continue to harvest the flowers. The autumn panels show plants that have begun to wither,

although there continue to be plentiful flowers to be harvested by two women and a young girl. The hardier plants are prominently featured, especially the bushes split between the ninth and tenth panels, which feature strong branches tipped with delicate white flowers.

This work is representative of the Art Nouveau style in that it breaks down traditional distinctions between “high” and “low” forms of art. This is accomplished through the inclusion of subjects, forms, and elements typically associated with fine arts in the fabrication of applied arts such as interior design, graphic arts, furniture, glass art, textiles, ceramics, jewelry, and metalwork. By diverging from the traditional use of patterns typical of wallpaper design, this wallpaper effectively mass produces the sophistication of monumental painting compositions and thereby makes it

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affordable to a greater proportion of the general public. This further democratization embodies the original purpose of wallpaper, which was to provide an affordable alternative to the wall-length tapestries of the European ultra-wealthy. Although they did not provide the insulation offered by a genuine tapestry, wallpaper allowed residents to brighten their homes and express their preferences within interior design.

This wallpaper was commissioned for the 1900 Exposition Universelle, held in Paris, France from April to November. That year's world's fair changed the face of Paris, with numerous advancements to the city's infrastructure still present today. This includes the Grand Palais and Petit Palais, now an exposition hall and prominent city-owned art modern museum respectively, the Gare d'Orsay,

now the Musée d'Orsay, the home of early modern art in the city, as well as the Metro Line 1, the first built and busiest section of the Paris metro system. Additionally, many technical innovations were debuted, including the Ferris wheel, moving sidewalk, the electric bus, escalators, diesel engines, electric cars, talking films, and the tape recorder.

The wallpaper was manufactured by the Parisian design firm, Defossé and Karth, a company founded in 1851.

Inspired by Realist painters Jean-Baptiste Corot and Jean-Francois Millet, they produced wallpapers for prominent French families, including a Cupid and Psyche series commissioned by Emperor Napoleon I. Their works received international acclaim and were popular in the United States as late as 1928, especially in New England and the South. The company's works are held in

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prominent institutions, including the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Yale University Art Gallery, and the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum of the Smithsonian Institution.

13 Rolls of Historic Art

Nouveau Panoramic Wallpaper

(\$5/8,000) will be offered in Michaan's Auctions April Gallery Auction on Friday, April 19th. The sale features excellent furniture pieces from the Asian Art Department, in addition to important works from notable artists, and a number of fine jewelry pieces. The auction is led by the Fine Art

Department, which will be offering oil paintings by George Demont Otis and Gideon Jacques Denny, while the Asian Art Department offers a 12-panel folding screen and a hanging rug. Also included in the sale are platinum, diamond, and gold items from the Jewelry Department.

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