

Cupboard Statue Beeldenkasten Oak Ebony Architectural  
Theological & Cardinal Virtues Amsterdam or Antwerp c1620

£25,000



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REF: 11870

Height: 222 mm (8.74")

Width: 158 mm (6.22")

Depth: 74 mm (2.91")

## Description

An exceptional, large, early-17th century, carved, oak & ebony, Flemish, statue cabinet or 'Beeldenkast' depicting the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity and the Cardinal Virtues of Prudence, Justice and Fortitude.

just purchased more information to follow

These monumental, four door cupboards with three or more fully sculpted figures are known as statue cupboards or beeldenkasten. The earliest example bearing a date of 1622 is in the Metropolitan, NY 64.81. These magnificent cupboards are a collaboration between a cabinetmaker and a master carver as guild regulations prevented a cabinetmaker from executing anything more than the simplest of carvings. Consequently these cupboards were very expensive probably intended as dowry pieces or wedding gifts. They were used to store valuable household linen and in most cases they would be the most important piece of furniture in the household. Characteristically the figural carvings were allegorical depicting the theological virtues Faith, Hope and Charity sometimes combined with the Cardinal Virtues of Prudence, Justice and Fortitude.

Called BLACK GOLD in the 17th century ebony was the most expensive wood; an instantly recognisable, status symbol, only within the reach of Kings and the Aristocracy.

The architectural language, the exceptional quality and meaning of the carving, the significant use of ebony, the classical columns, the depth of the mouldings and the thickness of the oak demonstrate that this piece was conceived to make a statement in the home which would have been understood and decoded by the cognoscenti conveying the status, wealth and refinement of the owner.

In three parts. The detachable, ogee cornice with male and female masks most likely representing the Cardinal Virtues of Prudence, Justice and Fortitude, either side of inlaid ebony tablets. The middle part with beautifully sculpted figures of the three theological Virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity, Deep moulded oak and ebony panels interposed. The bottom part with three classical sculpted lion masks either side of a single drawer with deep oak moulding and ebony panels. On bun feet. The interior is fitted with shelves. The working locks have many old repairs. Excellent original colour and patina.

Provenance : Private Collection; Sothebys 13th December 1991, lot 41.  
Important French and Continental Furniture and Tapestries

Length 158cm., 62" Height 222cm., 87 ½" Depth 74cm., 29"