



## 18th Century Antique

A neoclassical chimneypiece commemorating the peace between Great Britain and the United States of America. Circa 1777-1791. *See following page for further details and provenance.*

### Dimensions

Height 57½in (146.3cm) width 71½in (182cm)

Internal height 41in (104.6cm) width 44½in (113.4cm)

Footblock to footblock 67in (170cm)

Shelf depth 5¼in (13.5cm)

### Reference

G365

## Further details

The carved Bacchante figures are depicted performing an ecstatic dance upon two low plinths with crossed axes behind. The plinths are decorated with leaves and flowers of the tobacco plant and rattlesnakes, both of which are indigenous to the Americas. The central tablet depicts three female allegorical figures: Minerva, Britannia and America, which commemorates the peace and future harmonious relationship between Great Britain and the United States of America, after the American War of Independence. According to the family tradition of the previous owners, it belonged to Gouverneur Morris, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

This magnificent neoclassical chimneypiece, likely designed by the renowned architect Samuel Wyatt, was carved by the British sculptor John Bacon RA (1740-1799), one of the leading sculptors of the British Georgian period. Its vertical stiles feature a pair of beautifully dynamic Bacchante figures that derive from a work which Bacon exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1777. Morris could have commissioned the work from John Bacon in 1790-91, during his diplomatic mission to London, when he was sent by George Washington to resolve some of the major issues that had arisen since the signing of the Treaty.

There are three other known variations of this highly specific work. One at Sir William Stanley's residence of Hooton Hall, Cheshire. There is another version of these chimneypieces located at number 38 Grosvenor Square, London, whose 1780s interior is attributed to Samuel Wyatt. The third is at Pishiobury Park Mansion, which was remodelled after fire by James Wyatt in 1782-3 in Gothic Revival style for Jeremiah Milles.