A massive, pair of mid-19th century, 'antiquarian', oak, bookcases in the English, Renaissance, Revival style, inspired by the chimneypiece from the Old Palace, Bromley-by-Bow, dated 1606 by Vredeman de Vries, now in the British Galleries at the V&A, Museum, and the wooden Screen in the Great Hall at Knole Park, Kent

Sold

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REF: 10001

Height: 244 cm (96.1")

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Width: 215 cm (84.6")

Depth: 55 cm (21.7")

Description

These bookcases are executed in the 'antiquarian' manner. The English, Renaissance Revival style was very fashionable during the second half of the nineteenth century and the ornament has its roots in the Italian Renaissance. Their form is reminiscent of the earliest domestic examples now in the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge. The carved decoration is similar to that which would have been found in numerous houses in and around London in about 1600, reflecting the latest Renaissance style. The finely carved male and female busts above festoons of drapery and split baluster ornament on the pilasters are virtually identical to those on the fireplace of the panelled room from the Old Palace, Bromley-by-Bow, dated 1606 by Vredeman de Vries, now in the British Galleries at the V&A, Museum Number 248-1894. Similar decoration is also found on Wooden Screen in the Great Hall at Knole Park, Kent which was probably carved by William Portinton in the early 1600's.

Each bookcase is in two sections. The cornices are decorated with applied and carved, strapwork ornament. The uprights are headed with columns and male and female caryatids above festoons of drapery with split baluster ornament below. The tops are fitted with adjustable, open shelves. The lower sections are open with the uprights mirroring the reeding above.

The sides are panelled on the lower section and boarded above, headed with a return of the cornice. These bookcases have come from a large country house, and the return cornice, ends and moulding on one side of each bookcase appear to be later additions so that they are freestanding. They stand on turned, bun feet. English, last half of the 19th century.

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