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ART MARKET

Pick of the fair: Burzio

TEFAF Maastricht 2016

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Prie-dieu (c. 1726), Pietro Piffetti. Burzio, €90,000

SHAN



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**Prie-dieu
(c. 1726) Pietro Piffetti**

New exhibitor Burzio offers this rediscovered marquetry *prie-dieu*, attributed to the first royal cabinetmaker appointed to the court of Savoy in 1731 – a period of grand expansion in and around Turin. Charles Emmanuel II encouraged Piffetti's taste for the exotic by supplying rich materials, and his workshop duly produced the most luxurious of all Italian furniture. This ingenious and masterly cabinetmaker created a unique style where furniture and decorative objects were intricately inlaid with rare woods, ivory, tortoiseshell, and mother-of-pearl. His genius is an ability to combine richly ornamented surfaces with a strong sculptural form whose apparent simplicity belies the technical difficulties of veneering curved surfaces. This highly sophisticated piece with its sleek, refined lines and *trompe l'oeil* snakeskin marquetry was probably executed for the royal hunting lodge La Venaria Reale, northwest of Turin.

Selected by Susan Moore.



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