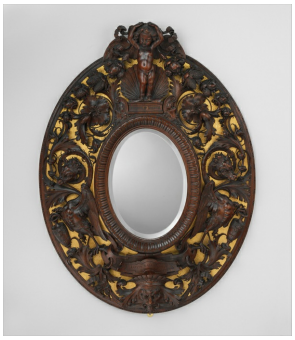
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Walnut mantelpiece by Egisto Gajani, 1888, Museo Stibbert, Firenze, Italy.

Born the 16th August 1832 in Florence, **Egisto Gajani** was one of the most famous wood carvers, active in his town during the last third of the 19th century. He studied at the **Academy of Fine Arts** and learnt the skill of engraving first at **Angiolo Barbetti**'s workshop, and then at **Francesco Morini**'s workshop. At the start of the 1860s, Gajani opened a small workshop on his own, and employed only one person to work for him. Significant orders allowed him to rapidly expand, and employ twelve to fourteen workers and several cabinet makers in 1867. In 1865, he took part in the **International Exhibition in Dublin** and received a medal. He was present at the big Universal Exhibitions of his time: the World's Fair of 1867 in Paris, the one in Philadelphia in 1876, and again in Paris in 1878, the one in Turin in 1884, and finally the one in Venice in 1887.
During the Parisian exhibition of 1867, he presented several major pieces of work, including two full length mirrors which would have taken eleven months to make.
His taste for naturalistic compositions probably came from his teacher Francesco Morini. Some critics in fact have said that Gajani was perhaps the only young Florentin sculptor to have made very similar naturalistic creations to his teacher, and that were sometimes made by directly copying nature. He soon abandoned the fragile vegetal decorations for larger and more monumental elements, focusing on detail and highly polished surfaces.
His **trips to Belgium, London, and Paris** for the Universal Exhibitions that took place during the 60s perhaps inspired him to **study sculpture from the Cinquecento period**. His fame was thus due to his elaborate Renaissance style furniture.
He first worked for rich patrician Italian families and then for a very wise European clientèle. He also received several official orders from the Italian state. Despite his fame, his workshop, on Via Nazionale, in Florence, went bankrupt in 1888. During his career, he contributed to the funding and management of the school for wood carvers, cabinet makers and carpenters of Florence, and from 1870, he became a member of the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence.



Oval carved frame by Egisto Gajani, 1870, Metropolitan Museum, New York, USA.

See also

Michelangelo Guggenheim — The Palazzo Papadopoli — Renaissance style — Neo-Renaissance style — 1878 World's Fair — 1867 World's Fair

See our antique furniture


EGISTO GAJANI
SCULPTEUR EN BOIS
Rue Nazionale, 4.

Dans l'atelier de ce sculpteur au quel des medailles honorifiques ont été decernées a toutes les Expositions Italiennes et Internationales, on a un gran Depôt d'objets d'art, sculptés en bois.

On reçoit des commandes pour l'Etranger et pour toute l'Italie de toutes espèces de travaux en bois et en ivoire.

EGISTO GAJANI
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Nazionale Street, 4.

In the office of this sculptor to whom honorary medals have been awarded at all the Italian and International, Exhibitions, a large Collection of Objects of Art are to be found; and picture frames and furniture of all kinds of wood are made to order.

Commissions in wood and ivory works are executed both for abroad and all Italy.

572. Annuncio pubblicitario di Egisto Gajani, in: *Guida commerciale, artistica e scientifica della città di Firenze*, Firenze 1873.

Advertising by Egisto Gajani in 1873.



573. Egisto Gajani, stipo, legno di noce intagliato, esibito all'esposizione di Parigi del 1878, Firenze 1877 ca.. Già asta Pandolfini, Firenze.

Carved walnut dresse by Egisto Gajani

shown at the World's Fair of 1878 In Paris. Antique picture.



574. Egisto Gajani, stipo, legno di noce intaglato, Firenze 1876. Foto d'epoca.

Piece of furniture by Egisto Gajani, 1876. Antique picture.



Signature by Egisto Gajani.