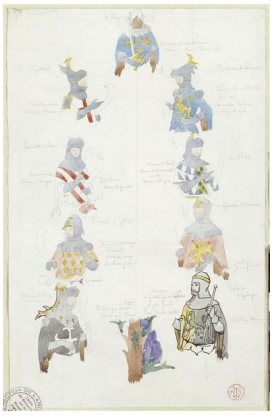
MARC MAISON

120, rue des rosiers
93400 Saint Ouen (France)
tel: +33.(0)6.60.62.61.90
contact@marcmaison.com

Monumental fireplace with Troubadour scenes decoration, 19th century, Marc Maison Gallery.



Eugene-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, sketch for the fireplace decoration in the Empress' room at the Chateau of Pierrefonds, circa 1857, Library of the Architecture and Patrimony, Charenton-le-Pont.

Fleury François Richard, Valentina of Milano mourning her husband Louis of Orleans, 1802, Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg.

Pierre Revoil, Henri IV playing with his children, 1817, National museum of the Chateau of Pau.

François-Honore Jacob-Desmalter, chairs from the Countess of Osmond's Gothic cabinet, 1817-1820, Paris, Petit Palais.

The great vogue for the **Middle Ages** and the **Renaissance** was already evident at the end of the eighteenth century, and reached the masses at the beginning of the 19th century, invading the **decorative arts**: not only the fine arts but all kinds of objects were decorated with knights' helmets, crenelated towers and pretty damsels. The fireplace area is not in left out, enabling the manufacturing of picturesque hoods and monumental overmantel , painted in the manner of the great seigniorial rooms. Hence, **Viollet-le-Duc** imagined a fireplace decorated with knights for the Empress's room at the **Chateau of Pierrefonds**, about 1857.

This frenetic fashion for **a legendary past** brings every year a lot of **paintings** to the Salon, that quickly give rise to the word tinged with irony of "**Troubadour style**". It is considered that one of the first troubadour paintings is exposed in 1802 by Fleury-Richard: *Valentine of Milan mourning the death of her husband* The historical episode is treated there by an anecdotal moment, taken on the instant, and making the scene more lively and intimate. **Paul Delaroche**, Eugene Dévéria, **Alexandre-Evariste Fragonard**, Pierre Revoil, Drölling, **Ingres** or Isabey are among the many painters who defended this style.

This great fashion thus radiates under the **Restoration**, having seduced the **Duchess of Berry** and the **Countess of Osmond**. Indeed, it is partly a reaction to the revolutionary violence, valuing the medieval Christian past in the wake of Chateaubriand, who published *Genius of Christianity* in 1800. Painters, engravers and sculptors frequent the French Museum of Monuments created after the destruction of the Revolution. But this fashion is far from affecting only the nostalgic and pious souls, becoming an inexhaustible source of **dreams** until the end of the nineteenth century. In Paris, important shops spread the taste, notably the tablemaker **Alphonse Giroux** but also the **Escalier de Cristal**.

Born at the same time as the **Neo-Gothic style**, it is not uncommon for works to be Neo-Gothic as well as Troubadour. However, the term Neo-Gothic was born to describe architecture, and applies by extensions to all references to the Gothic style in ornamentation, especially the lancet archs. On the other hand, the Troubadour style, born from painting, covers much more mixtures and **fantasies**. It can extend in particular to representations of the Renaissance, thus intersecting the **Neo-Renaissance style**. The representation of scenes often dominates, the artists taking passion for the representation of episodes taken from the life of Saint Louis, Chevalier Bayard, Henri IV or Francis I; but also inventing **imaginary knights** and fantastic animals.

Plate of the Dugueslin set, 1835, painting after Alexandre-Evariste Fragonard, Sevres, Cité de la céramique.

Purse, circa 1852-1870, Galliera Palace, the City of Paris' museum of Fashion.

Félicie de Fauveau, Model for a monument to Clemence Isaure, 1845, Museum of the Augustinians, Toulouse.

Count de Nieuwerkerke, The Death of the Duke of Clarence, 1838, Marc Maison Gallery.

Troubadour scene carved on a Neo-Renaissance dresser, circa 1880, Marc Maison Gallery.

Gustave Dore, Fun, 1881, Paris, Orsay Museum.