



LIZ O'BRIEN

*New York*

### MAISON JANSEN

Two-drawer breakfront commode with painted *trompe l'oeil* decoration and veined gray marble top. Raised on hipped cabriole legs with gilt bronze hoof sabots. The whimsical painted surface includes playing cards, tassels, a key, compass, pocket watch, feather, butterflies and other small objects. Jansen cleverly claimed the piece as their own by signing and addressing the envelope to the left of the bottom drawer. The letter on the right of the drawer mentions Ince and Mayhew, best known for their 1762 book *The Universal System of Household Furniture*, which was in response to their rival Thomas Chippendale's 1754 *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director*.

Maison Jansen's designs are unique for their melding of 18<sup>th</sup> century French palace historicism and Paris café society chic, making it one of the most internationally famous and influential interior decorating firms of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Duke and Duchess of Windsor, King Leopold II, Coco Chanel, The Shah of Iran, the Rockefellers and the Kennedy White House are among Maison Jansen's most notable clientele.

By the 1930's *trompe l'oeil* commodes became a Jansen signature because of their intimate, personalized quality. Each piece included painted depictions of objects chosen by the patron and was designed to complement the intended interior. Thus, the uniqueness of Jansen's *trompe l'oeil* furniture makes them the rarest and most sought-after of the design house's work because these were commissioned pieces for individual clients.

Signed and addressed on the painted envelope.  
French, c. 1940

### DOCUMENTATION:

James Archer Abbott. "Jansen."  
NY: Acanthus, 2006. page 281.

James Archer Abbott. "Jansen Furniture."  
NY: Acanthus, 2007. Showing this very model  
for the Duke and Duchess of Windsor on  
page 252.



Jean Leveque et al., eds, *Jansen Decoration*, Paris, 1971, page 177.



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Measurements

Height: 35"

Width: 49"

Depth: 23.5"

*Reference #2674*



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252 JANSEN FURNITURE



TROMPE L'OEIL-DECORATED COMMODOE (TOP), MADE FOR THE DUCHESS OF WINDSOR'S BEDROOM AT "LA CRÔE," 1938, AND CHINOISE-INSPIRED PAINTED COMMODOE, C. 1940