ALEXANDRE BORISOVICH SEREBRIAKOFF (RUSSIAN 1907-1995) PROJECT FOR THE DECORATION OF LA MAISON A LA VIELLE RUSSIE
signed, inscribed and dated ‘18 Mai 1953,’ pen and ink and gouache
49.5cm x 67cm (19.5in x 26.25in) and five further projects for the decoration of La Vielle Russie (6)

Provenance: Russian Works of Art from the Collection of The Late Jan Bethge Esq.

Note: Alexandre Serebriakoff was a celebrated Russian-French illustrator, particularly known for his paintings of interiors. Serebriakoff was born in 1907 in Neskuchnoe, in the Kurskiy region (modern Ukraine). His mother, Zinaida Serebriakova was herself a prominent artist, who originated from a famous family of architects, sculptors and painters from Benois-Lancere. In 1905 she had married the engineer Boris Serebriakoff. Having trained in Saint Petersburg, Italy and Paris, she became one of the most prominent "World of Art" [Mir Iskusstva] painters of pre-revolutionary Russia. The family's situation changed drastically with the 1917 Revolution. In 1919 Boris Serbriakoff was imprisoned by the Bolshevik government and died in captivity, leaving Zinaida with four children and a sick mother in the war-torn and starving Ukraine. In 1924 however, Zinaida was commissioned to undertake a large project in Paris. She initially planned to return to Russia after the completion of her work, but it was unwise to do so due to the country's continuing political instability. Only two of her four children Alexandre and Ekaterina, managed to escape to France and the family would not be reunited for decades, when in 1960 Zinaida met her two other children after 36 years of separation.

Alexandre Serebriakoff remained in Paris for the rest of his life. A largely self-trained artist, he adopted the tradition of the "World of Art" movement and predominantly worked in watercolour and gouache, producing highly realistic interiors in a traditional style. He also worked as a book illustrator with French and British publishers, and collaborated with the renowned grocers Maison Fauchon, along with French cinema and fashion magazines.

Serebriakoff became well-known as a specialist interior painter, specifically for his paintings of Paris' hôtels particuliers, painting Daisy Fellowes' rooms at the Paris Ritz in 1948 and the Parisian apartment of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Le Château de Groussay. During his lifetime the artist showed his work in numerous group exhibitions in France and Belgium.

It is known that Alexandre's sister Catherine, who also worked as an interior painter, collaborated with her brother on many projects, however, her signature often does not appear on the artworks, as she preferred Alexandre to sign the paintings himself.

This series of drawings and watercolours were created as part of a collaboration between Alexandre Serebriakoff and the Paris-based Russian antique dealers, A La Vienne Russie.
and are records of the decorative scheme Serebriakoff created for their shop windows and first-floor library. A La Vieille Russie, was founded in Kiev in 1851 but left the turmoil of the Revolution to be re-established in Paris in the 1920's by the descendants of the original owner. In its original incarnation, Carl Faberge, who held a premises nearby, was a client. The business continued to flourish in Paris, with many high-profile clients including the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. It ultimately became a focal point for socialising among European high-society. At the start of the Second World War, the gallery relocated again, to New York City, taking over premises in the Rockefeller Centre. In America it became the market leader for Fabergé and Russian Imperial treasures, assisting in the formation of some major museum-quality collection. Still a family business, A La Vieille Russie continues to deal in fine art and antiques from Fifth Avenue, New York.