



Patriotic Devotion Showcase - "long Live Napoleon III" - Popular Art - Second Empire



450 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Solid wood

Description

Second half of the 19th century Second Empire - Circa 1855-1870 France - Massif Central Small display case in softwood (maple and fir), finely carved in light relief with a patriotic decoration dedicated to Napoleon III. The work of a self-taught craftsman of the Second Empire, it testifies to the spread, even in the countryside, of imperial imagery and Napoleonic memory, perceived as a symbol of order and prosperity after the troubles of 1848. On the upper part, a horseman waving his hat--a naive but explicit representation of the Emperor--dominates the composition. Below, two figures engage in a saber fight, framing the sculpted motto: "VIVE NAPOLEON III". The frame is decorated with flowers, foliage, and a vase decorated with a star, symbols of vitality and attachment to the

Dealer

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established power. Behind the box-like shape, this work should be understood as a showcase of patriotic devotion, inspired by domestic altars and religious reliquary boxes. Through its glass structure and sculpted façade, it transposes the codes of the sacred into the profane realm: the sovereign replaces the figure of the saint, and the imperial motto serves as a secular prayer. This shift from religious devotion to a form of political worship illustrates the way in which imperial power appropriated the symbolic languages of faith to anchor itself in daily life. The flat relief, the frontal composition, and the stylized figures translate a sculptural language specific to the popular art of the Massif Central: spontaneous, sincere, and rooted in rural culture. Each motif, carved directly from the block, expresses as much the spirit of the times as the simple poetry of the hand that shaped it. The base and glass are later additions, probably from the end of the 19th century, made to stabilize and protect the piece without altering its spirit. The warm golden patina of the wood underlines the age and sensitivity of the work. Rare and evocative, this display case is at the crossroads of everyday furniture, political souvenir and domestic relic. A unique testimony to a time when imperial power imposed itself even in the popular imagination, it reveals the way in which the symbols of faith were gradually invested by those of the regime. Condition: beautiful old patina, slight crack on the upper part, base and glass added. Dimensions: H. 44.5 cm - W. 25 cm - D. 12.5 cm ALL DELIVERIES ARE MADE BY DHL EXPRESS ONLY.