



Rock Crystal Casket Attributed To Giovanni Battista Metellino (milan, D.1724).



18 800 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Crystal de roche

Description

Engraved Rock Crystal and Gilt Bronze Casket with Silver Relief Base. Attributed to the workshop of Giovanni Battista Metellino (active Milan, d. circa 1724). Milan, late 17th century.

Measurements: 22.5 x 14 x 13.5 cm. A rectangular casket composed of finely bevelled panels of natural rock crystal, each intricately engraved with scenes of pastoral and hunting life. The decoration includes trees, towers, bridges, rivers with boats, figures, birds, and insects, while the lid displays a flight of birds amid sprays of foliage. The panels are mounted within a gilt bronze framework of elegant rectangular section, with flower-head studs at the corners and scrolled Baroque feet. The lid opens to reveal a gilt bronze base, originally designed to accommodate hardstone specimens, now replaced -- likely

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during the 19th century -- by repoussé silver panels. These silver reliefs are worked with Baroque scrolls and strapwork surrounding a central oval bearing a coronet and monogram MM, framed by the original ormolu mounts. The combination of engraved crystal and gilded structure produces a luminous interplay of light characteristic of Milanese lapidary work of the highest quality. One small gilt-bronze corner flower mount is missing on the right-hand side, and there is a minor chip to the upper right of the front rock crystal panel, as well as a further chip to the upper right of the rock crystal panel on the left-hand side. This casket is attributable to the workshop of Giovanni Battista Metellino, the foremost Milanese lapidary of the late seventeenth century. His works are characterised by a restrained elegance and technical mastery, focusing on the transparency of the crystal enlivened by delicate engraving -- an approach reflecting the refinement of Lombard Baroque taste. The figural and natural motifs, often including birds and foliage, are hallmarks of his style and demonstrate both artistic and material sophistication. Provenance: Private collection.

Comparisons: A comparable casket attributed to Giovanni Battista Metellino was offered by Aguttes, Neuilly, Classical Arts: 50 Years of Passion, Collection D., 12 October 2022, Lot 30. <https://www.aguttes.com/en/lot/130371/19209458>? The Museo del Prado, Madrid, houses a rock crystal tray of closely related workmanship, with similarly engraved panels, gilded bronze mounts, and feet, catalogued as by the workshop of Giovanni Battista Metellino (Inventory number O000107). <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/octagonal-rock-crystal-tray-with-four-engraved/9502ac4f-8567-415f-8a9d-0d53210d951e?searchid=4f5b3d91-56c3-6acf-f09e-1069a646a1f1>

Two further rock crystal trays of comparable design, with related mounts and engraved crystal panels, are preserved in the Louvre Museum, Paris (Inventory numbers OA 62 B and MR

476).<https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010103478>
<https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010111839> Additional engraved rock crystal pieces by or attributed to the same workshop are held in the Louvre Museum (Inventory numbers OA 62 B, MR 476, OA 6398, OA 6402, and OA 6419), showing close parallels in style and engraving technique.<https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010114448>
<https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010117404>
<https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010108073>