Qatar With Hidden Erotic Miniatures, India, Early 20th Century



2 000 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Wrought iron

Description

A unique and rare Indian katar made of damascened steel with a moiré pattern and inlaid iron, designed as much as a ceremonial weapon as a refined work of art.The distinctive triangular blade, reinforced by two broad longitudinal ribs converging toward the tip, is made of damascened steel, featuring an elegant moiré pattern resulting from the forging of several steels of different compositions. The with a transverse grip--characteristic of this typically Indian weapon--is richly adorned with fine engraved plant scrollwork inlaid with yellow metal, while the central panels, on both the obverse and reverse, are decorated with a delicate geometric star motif.The most remarkable feature is the two hinged flaps, positioned on either side of the hilt and held closed by a small hook. Once opened,

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they reveal two miniatures painted on paper, protected under glass, depicting couples in erotic scenes, executed in the tradition of Rajasthani miniatures, inspired by the amorous themes of the Kama Shastra and Indian court painting. The compositions, set respectively in a moonlit lakeside landscape and inside a pavilion opening onto a garden, are distinguished by a vibrant color palette, delicate facial expressions, and remarkable finesse in the rendering of costumes, jewelry, and architectural elements. The unexpected juxtaposition between a weapon--traditionally a symbol of martial valor--and two delicate miniatures devoted to love and eroticism lends this set a character of rare originality. Rather than serving a truly offensive purpose, this katar seems to belong to the category of prestige weapons, intended to inspire wonder and offer their owner are fined a esthetic pleasure, in keeping with a well-documented tradition in the luxury arts of princely India.The mount is further enriched with abundant engraved and inlaid decoration that extends along the edges of the handle, the upper crossguard, and the base of the blade, while the quality of the damask steel forging attests to the high level of craftsmanship in this piece. While retaining the traditional structure of the katar, the famous thrusting dagger of Northern India, this example stands out for the refinement of its decoration and for the unusual presence of hidden miniatures, which transform a ceremonial weapon into a remarkable work of art and collector's item, illustrating the full range of craftsmanship found in Indian workshops during the early decades of the 20th century.H 56.5 x W max. 9 cm.