



Calumet (stem Puzzle)-mario Luraschi Collection

11 500 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état



Description

Sioux (Dakota/Lakota), Northern Plains - Great Lakes Region
Circa 1870-1885
Catlinite, carved openwork wood, hide, glass beads
Length: 93.5 cm
Height of the stove: 10.5 cm
Price: 12,500 EUR
A rare ceremonial set consisting of a red catlinite pipe bowl, an exceptional openwork wooden "puzzle stem," and a beaded leather storage pouch. The bowl, carved from a beautiful, uniform piece of red catlinite, features an L-shape with a slightly flared mouth. It is mounted on a long carved wooden stem whose openwork decoration alternates between long spindle-shaped openings and opposing crescents, executed with remarkable precision. This extremely delicate carving technique belongs to the very limited family of "puzzle stems," whose internal bore follows a deliberately complex path,

Dealer

Collection

Rare & Unusual Objects

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demonstrating the maker's virtuosity. Long considered technical curiosities, these pipes are now recognized as a distinct category of North American ceremonial pipes. Recent research, particularly that focused on the historical collections of the Royal Ontario Museum, the Národní muzeum in Prague, and several major American collections, shows that they were made in the Great Lakes and Northern Plains regions during the second half of the 19th century.

Experts note that their attribution varies among several groups--the Ojibwa, Dakota, Menominee, or neighboring peoples--illustrating the artistic and ceremonial exchanges that existed at the time between these communities. This particular example, however, stands out for one exceptional feature: a pipe bag. The sheath, made of aged hide, is adorned with turquoise, white, red, and yellow glass beads arranged in a simple and elegant geometric pattern. Its elongated shape, beaded upper edge, decorated vertical border, two end tabs, and closing straps perfectly match the typology of calumet bags from the Plains peoples. Such sets are now infinitely rarer than pipes or pipe bowls preserved on their own. Similar pouches are held in several major American institutions, particularly those related to the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Dakota cultures. Beyond its technical significance, this calumet bears witness to a fundamental spiritual tradition of the Plains peoples. Ceremonial tobacco served as a means of communication with the spirit world; the smoke of prayers was carried to the Great Spirit and accompanied treaties, alliances, religious ceremonies, and major events in community life. The set displays remarkable ethnographic coherence: the catlinite bowl, the rare puzzle stem, and its beaded sheath together form a complete testament to a tradition that is now very rarely preserved in its entirety. Provenance: Mario Luraschi collection.