



Brass Calumet (pipe-tomahawk) With A Steel Blade And Dovetail Joint



6 500 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Brass

Description

Northeastern North America - Great Lakes
RegionCirca 1815Provenance: Bernard
Souteyrand CollectionRare brass trading calumet
(tomahawk pipe) head, featuring a steel cutting
edge mounted with a dovetail joint (steel
dovetailed edge). The small circular eye is
designed to accommodate a through-shaft handle,
while the turned cylindrical bowl rests on a neck
elegantly reinforced by two triangular ridges.The
trapezoidal blade is openworked with a heart
motif and entirely outlined with a pattern of small
hand-stamped dots. The steel cutting edge is
secured by a mechanical dovetail joint, ensuring a
particularly effective lock between the steel and
the brass body. This manufacturing process,
characteristic of the finest trading
pipe-tomahawks, attests to remarkable technical

Dealer

Collection

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mastery. This head belongs to a well-documented family of Great Lakes pipe-tomahawks. In his reference work **American Indian Tomahawks**, Harold L. Peterson illustrates several variants of these artifacts. Figure 214, described on page 123, shows a head very similar in construction to our specimen, with a small circular eye, a cylindrical socket, and a steel cutting edge mounted in a dovetail joint. The same head, from the former collection of Harold L. Peterson, was offered at a public auction by Bonhams in 2015, where it was described as a brass pipe-tomahawk head composed of brass with a steel dovetailed edge. This publication serves as a direct reference for this type of manufacture. Another comparable example is held at the British Museum under accession number Am.6744. This brass pipe-tomahawk head, featuring a fitted iron cutting edge and decorated with engraved motifs, confirms the existence of ornate variants within this same family of North American artifacts. Our specimen stands out for its particularly appealing decorative style, combining an openwork heart with a continuous pattern of stamped dots--a feature rarely preserved in such good condition. The balance of its proportions, the finesse of its craftsmanship, and the quality of its construction make it a variant of great interest among the trade pipe-tomahawks of the first third of the 19th century.

Bibliography
Harold L. Peterson, **American Indian Tomahawks**, Museum of the American Indian - Heye Foundation, New York, 1971, fig. 214, p. 123.
Bonhams, Native American Art, 2015, auction of the pipe-tomahawk head reproduced from Harold L. Peterson.
British Museum, London, inv. Am.6744, brass pipe-tomahawk head with an iron cutting edge decorated with engraved motifs