



Knife Sheath Made From Porcupine Quills (quillwork)



16 500 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Description

Northern Great Plains, likely Blackfoot (Pieds-Noirs) or Plains Cree Circa 1855-1875 Raw hide, dyed porcupine quills, leather, metal, wood, and steel. Former Bernard Souteyrand Collection. A remarkable set consisting of an antique trading knife preserved in its original sheath, entirely decorated using the traditional quillwork technique, embroidery made from porcupine quills, one of the most iconic decorative arts of the Indigenous peoples of the Great Plains. Before the widespread introduction of European glass beads, this technique was the primary method of ornamentation for prestige objects. The sheath features a highly elegant design, composed of long, undulating bands of ivory and yellow-orange framed by bands of reddish-brown. The quills, carefully flattened and

Dealer

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then sewn onto the raw hide, create a surface with iridescent sheen that reveals the exquisite craftsmanship involved in their application. The regularity of the design, the balance of the motifs, and the quality of the workmanship attest to a remarkable mastery of this technique, which has now become rare. The long side and end strips, decorated with coiled quills and finished with metal cones trimmed with tufts of hair, are a characteristic ornament of the prestigious artifacts from the northern Great Plains of the mid-19th century. Their excellent state of preservation further enhances the set's appeal. The milking knife, deliberately simple in design, is mounted on a weathered wooden handle fitted with a small brass guard intended to protect the hand. Its blade, preserved with its original patina, reflects the utilitarian purpose of these tool-weapons that accompanied their owners in their daily lives. The uniformity of the patinas, the perfect dimensional fit between the knife and its sheath, and the remarkable quality of the quillwork lend this set a great sense of coherence. It stands as a particularly representative example of the art of the Great Plains in the mid-19th century and is distinguished as much by its aesthetic quality as by its ethnographic significance. Price: EUR16,500