



Large Plains Knife With A Fully Beaded Sheath



6 750 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Description

Northern Plains (Lakota, Dakota, Yankton, Plains Cree or Métis) Second half of the 19th century (circa 1880-1910) Handle made of antler, forged steel, hide, and glass beads. Provenance: former Bernard Souteyrand collection. Description This set consists of a large Great Plains knife preserved with its remarkable original sheath, entirely covered with glass beadwork of exceptional quality. The knife is mounted on an elegant, slightly curved antler handle, featuring a beautiful antique patina that attests to its long use. The through-tang is riveted to a wide brass washer, using a technique traditionally employed by Indigenous artisans to reassemble European or American milking knives. The forged steel blade alone stands as a remarkable testament to metallurgical craftsmanship. In addition to its

Dealer

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meticulously crafted geometry--characterized by a perfectly gradual tapering of its thickness down to a remarkably fine point--it retains, across both sides, an exceptional network of intersecting micro-grooves forming a grid of remarkable regularity. The lines, which are extremely fine, perfectly parallel, and intersect at a constant angle, form a uniform grid covering the entire surface of the blade. The age of this finish is attested by the original patina, which perfectly conforms to this microscopic relief and has developed within the grooves themselves, demonstrating that this work is part of the initial manufacturing process and is the result neither of sharpening, nor from abrasive cleaning, nor from any subsequent intervention. To date, despite extensive research conducted in specialized literature devoted to Sheffield manufacturers, milking knives, and 19th-century blade-making processes, we have been unable to identify either a technical reference describing such a finishing process or a known workshop that is documented to have employed it. To the best of our knowledge, this micro-texturing remains unexplained in the published literature.

Regardless of its attribution, this blade stands out for its exceptional craftsmanship and an uncommon degree of technical sophistication. The true appeal of this set also lies in its spectacular, fully beaded scabbard. Set against a turquoise-blue background delicately framed by a thin dark-blue border, it features an elegant floral design consisting of a large red and orange flower with subtly shaded petals, extended by a sinuous stem adorned with green leaves of remarkable finesse. The quality of this embroidery reveals the hand of a particularly skilled artisan. The perfect regularity of the rows of beads, the precision of the design, the balance of the composition, and the richness of the color nuances place this piece among the finest examples of beadwork from the Northern Plains in the late 19th century. The long leather fringes, fully preserved, further enhance the visual impact and elegance of the piece. This

floral design is fully in line with the major aesthetic trend that developed among the peoples of the Northern Plains beginning in the 1870s. Inspired by Euro-Canadian floral embroidery, these motifs were quickly reinterpreted through the unique sensibility of Indigenous artists and became one of the most refined hallmarks of Lakota, Dakota, Cree, and Métis art. Thus, this knife is distinguished not only by the extraordinary quality of its beaded sheath. Its blade, with its delicate geometry and the enigmatic micro-texture that completely covers both sides, stands as a remarkable testament to 19th-century craftsmanship. Its elegant antler handle, perfectly balanced and preserved with a superb patina from use, contributes fully to the harmony of the entire piece. Combining a blade of exceptional quality and originality, a highly elegant handle, and a fully beaded sheath that ranks among the finest examples of Northern Plains art, this set displays remarkable aesthetic, technical, and historical coherence. Preserved in its entirety and in remarkable condition, and originating from the former Bernard Souteyrand collection, it is a first-rate piece intended for both collectors of antique weapons and enthusiasts of First Nations arts.