



PROANTIC
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North American First Nations Art: Tomahawk-prestige Pipe



12 500 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : En l'etat

Description

Plains Nations or Great Lakes region, North America
Second half of the 19th century, circa 1850-1880
Wood, forged steel, and presumed silver inlays, likely of low purity
Dimensions: 51 × 21 cm
The tomahawk-pipe is one of the most iconic objects of the First Nations cultures of North America. Combining an axe and a pipe in a single object, it could serve utilitarian, ceremonial, and status-symbol functions. In particular, it was used during solemn gatherings, the formation of alliances, and diplomatic exchanges. This specimen stands out for the elegance of its proportions and the particularly meticulous quality of its craftsmanship. Its long wooden handle, slightly curved and widened toward the bottom, features a deep, dark brown patina. It is accented by several metal fittings,

Dealer

Collection

Rare & Unusual Objects

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presumed to be silver, likely of low purity: rings, a lower ferrule, and geometric inlays consisting of a large rhombus and four circular discs arranged vertically. The edges of the rings are adorned with alternating fine oblique striations forming delicate herringbone friezes. The forged steel head retains the irregularities and traces of its artisanal craftsmanship. Its widely flared blade is openworked with a heart-shaped motif, a rare decorative element that gives the object a distinctive character. Its edge, which remains extremely sharp and razor-like, confirms that this is not merely a decorative piece, but an axe designed to be fully functional. Opposite the blade, the cylindrical, fluted bowl connects to the internal tube carved into the handle, allowing the object to be used effectively as a pipe. The base of the head is also adorned with incised geometric patterns. The combination of dark wood, weathered steel, and light-colored trim creates a particularly harmonious contrast. The signs of wear, the deep patina on the handle, and the overall coherence of the various elements all contribute to this piece's striking presence. With its elegant silhouette, the understated richness of its inlays, its fully functional design, and the originality of its blade, which is openwork in the shape of a heart, this tomahawk-pipe is a remarkable collector's item linked to the cultures of the First Nations of North

America. **PROVENANCE** Formerly in the collection of Bernard Souteyrand (1943-2025), France. In very fine condition. As the exact nature and grade of the metal mountings have not been analyzed, their identification as likely low-purity silver is provided subject to revision. **PRICE:** EUR12,500 Formerly in the Bernard Souteyrand Collection (1943-2025)