Japanese Red Lacquered Panel In Shibayama Technique, Meiji Period, 19th Century, Japan.



1 200 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Etat d'usage

Material : Oil painting on wood

Width : 49

Height : 92

Description

Shibayama panel made of red-lacquered wood, decorated withcarved bone inlays depicting an eagle, Meiji period, Japan, 19th century. WithsealDimensions: 92 cm high x 49 cm wideJapanese red lacquered wooden panel, decorated using the Shibayama technique, with carved bone inlays in relief. The composition depicts a bird of prey, possibly an eagle, perched on a sinuous branch and surrounded by botanical elements and flowering branches evoking the blossoming of the Japanese cherry tree (sakura). The piece belongs to one of the most refined ornamental traditions of late nineteenth-century Japanese art, characterized by the richness of its materials, the meticulousness of its craftsmanship and the complexity of its compositions.The Shibayama technique is a form of decoration

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applied to lacquered surfaces, involving the incorporation of carved and inlaid natural materials. It experienced particularly significant development during the Meiji period (1868-1912). Its name derives from the Shibayama family of craftsmen, associated with the development and dissemination of this ornamental speciality towards the end of the Edo period. The technique involves creating decorative compositions from small elements made of different materials, carefully cut, carved and applied to lacquered wooden surfaces.Among the materials most frequently employed are mother-of-pearl, nacre, bone, ivory, tortoiseshell and, occasionally, coral. One of the most distinctive characteristics of this technique lies in the three-dimensional treatment of the inlays, which may project slightly beyond the surface, creating effects of relief, depth and contrast of light. The combination of materials with different textures and tonalities achieves a remarkable degree of ornamental refinement. During the Meiji period, numerous Shibayama pieces were also produced for commercial distribution in Western markets, reflecting the growing international appreciation of Japanese decorative arts.From an iconographic perspective, the representation of birds and flowers belongs to a long-standing artistic tradition in East Asia, associated with the Chinese pictorial genre known as huaniaohua, literally meaning "flower-and-bird painting". This genre, whose origins date back to earlier periods, achieved particular prominence during the Song dynasty (960-1279), developing a visual language based on the meticulous observation of the natural world and the symbolic associations between animals, plants and landscape elements.This tradition was gradually incorporated into the Japanese artistic repertoire through cultural exchanges with China, particularly during the Edo and Meiji periods, while undergoing a distinctive reinterpretation adapted to Japanese aesthetic sensibilities and ornamental

conventions. Within this context, compositions depicting birds among flowering branches became an important feature of the decorative arts, where naturalistic representation was frequently combined with symbolic meanings associated with prosperity, longevity, strength and good fortune.In the present panel, the figure of the bird of prey, possibly identifiable as an eagle, occupies a central position. It is rendered through delicate carved bone inlays worked in relief. The treatment of the plumage, the arrangement of the wings and the definition of the head demonstrate particularly meticulous craftsmanship and remarkable attention to anatomical detail. The figure stands out against the red lacquer background, whose intense colour enhances the contrast with the pale tones of the bone and the surrounding botanical elements.The sinuous branches and flowers arranged around the bird introduce a visual counterpoint of delicacy and dynamism. Their possible evocation of cherry blossom (sakura) allows for a symbolic interpretation associated with the transient beauty of nature, seasonal renewal and the ephemeral nature of existence.The association between the bird of prey and the flowering branches thus establishes an interesting dialogue between two iconographic registers: on the one hand, the strength, nobility and authority traditionally attributed to birds of prey; on the other, the beauty, renewal and transience associated with the blossoming of the cherry tree. Beyond its ornamental value, this combination illustrates the capacity of Japanese art to integrate elements of the natural world into compositions of considerable aesthetic and symbolic richness.