



Extraordinary Gold Mounted Wooden Cross Pendant. Mexican, Around C.1600.



12 000 EUR

Period : 16th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Gold

Description

Extraordinary gold mounted wooden cross pendant. Mexican, around c.1600.

An Extraordinary gold mounted wooden cross pendant.

Mexican, around c.1600.

Measures 8.1 x 3.8 x 1.9cm.

The high carat gold cross encloses a polychromed wooden cross carved to both sides and set behind glass panels.

The cross is carved to one side with Saint Joseph holding the Christ child, beneath the Dove of the Holy Spirit, flanked by angels and above the praying Virgin.

Dealer

Belle Histoire

Early European sculpture, works of art and jewellery

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The other side is carved with the crucified Christ, flanked on three sides by angels and above a Nun Saint.

Similar examples of this rare cruciform jewel are hard to find, however it draws strong parallels with tabernacle jewels and triptych pendants of the 16th and 17th centuries and circular devotional pendants of the 18th centuries.

Image 9:

A 16th century gold and enamel tabernacle form jewel in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number: 17.190.886.

Image 10:

A silver mounted portable altarpiece - triptych pendant, dated to circa. 1500 - 1600 in the collection of the British Museum, London, Museum number: 1889,0507.7.

Image 11:

Both sides of an 18th century pendant in a Private collection, published in; Relicarios The Forgotten Jewels of Latin America, by Martha J. Egan.

The tradition of carving tiny devotional wooden reliefs for pendants began in the 16th century and continued throughout the 17th and 18th centuries in Mexico, the carvings were often sent to Spain where they were mounted in pendants of silver and gold.

Relicarios, The Forgotten Jewels of Latin America, by Martha J. Egan:

'When ivory became difficult to obtain in Europe

during the Middle Ages, following the Ottoman conquest of North Africa, European sculptors of miniature works, notably in the Netherlands and northern Europe, found boxwood to be a serviceable substitute. While only items of limited size can be carved in this hard, fine-grained wood, it can be highly polished, its light color is attractive, its density renders it unlikely to split or chip, and when finished, the carved material can resemble ivory.

Fray Pedro de Gate and at least one of his Flemish friar colleagues, who founded the San José de los Naturales school in the 1520s, emigrated to Mexico from the prosperous Brabant region in central Belgium, where for a short period in the early sixteenth century one workshop or possibly more produced exquisite, finely detailed miniature religious carvings in boxwood.

Wealthy art patrons, especially during the nineteenth century in the US and Europe, avidly collected boxwood miniatures: rosary beads, plaques, triptychs, and other finely carved religious ornaments are now on display in major museums.'