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Strongbox Safe Iron Painted Armada Chest Nuremberg Renaissance

£7,200

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REF: 11373

Height: 106.5 cm (41.9")

Width: 68.5 cm (27")

Depth: 38 cm (15")

Description

Rare, small, late-Renaissance, Nuremberg, iron, 'armada box', strongbox or travelling safe with its original, naïve, painted decoration

This is a rare, small, example of these characterful, early models of transportable safes. The much larger traditional chest sized strongboxes are more common and few small strongboxes survive either because less were made or they were broken into and destroyed. The naïve painting on this strongbox has survived in excellent condition over 400 years in excellent condition, exuding charm and character with acceptable losses and wear commensurate with use. The naïve, landscape and floral vignettes are a characteristically charming feature of these strongboxes, the inclusion of landscape scenes is more unusual. As well as money, gold and jewellery, documents and private papers are recorded as being kept in strong boxes, which were also used to safeguard items of personal value. The lock mechanism is unusually in working order so this strongbox can still perform its original function.

The top with ten, panels reinforced with strap work and bolts, retaining traces of their original stylised vignettes of flowers and foliage which are in better condition than usual. The iron key and working lock are Georgian replacements. The original central rectangular key plate has been nailed in and another keyhole has been filled in indicating that both the original and a subsequent key were lost and the strongbox was broken into at least twice accounting for the removal of both these locks. The hinges original. The interior painted earth red which is traditional.

The front with ten, panels reinforced with strap work and bolts. The two upper panels either side of the lockplate are painted with Northern European landscape scenes and the other panels contain stylized flowerheads depicting peonies, chrysanthemums and tulips. The twin hasps have been removed . The false escutcheon centered on the front in the form of four acanthus leaf fleur-de-lys and retaining traces of the original gilding. The sides with six, panels reinforced with strap work and bolts and original carrying handles and a repeat of the decoration on the front on a smaller scale. Retaining original, Fine, naïve stylized vignettes of flowers, trailing stems and landscapes on a dark green ground. Southern German, Nuremberg, fourth quarter of 16th century.

The antiquarian, oak Stand has been made from a small 18th century table with later stretchers to accommodate this strongbox, most likely in the late-19th century.

Strongbox Height 38 cm, 15 inches., Strongbox on stand height 106.50cm., 42 inches

Length 68.50cm, 27 inches., Depth 38 cm, 15 inches

Provenance: Private Collection, Italy along with a smaller, table-top, strongbox.

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