

Strongbox Safe Iron Table-Top Renaissance Painted Nuremberg
Armada Chest Folk

Sold



REF: 11372

Height: 30.5 cm (12")

Width: 53 cm (20.9")

Depth: 30.5 cm (12")

Description

Exceptional, small, late-renaissance, table-top, Nuremberg, iron, 'armada box', strongbox or travelling safe with its original, naïve, painted decoration

This is a rare, small, table-top, 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, floral vignettes are a characteristically charming feature of these strongboxes. This strongbox has been lined in concrete to make it impenetrable suggesting it was used as a safe in modern times. 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 original keyplate is intact, as is the eight bolt lock mechanism which is unusually in working order as they have often been removed so this strongbox can still perform its function.

The top with eight, panels reinforced with strap work, and bolts and retaining traces of their original stylized vignettes of flowers and foliage. The central rectangular key plate revealing the keyhole. The key operating the original locking mechanism on the interior of the lid throwing eight bolts. Protected by a inner lock plate engraved in relief with a central four petal flower within a fretwork diagonal motif held by four large fluid, scrolling acanthus leaves three panels depicting mermaids amongst scrolling acanthus leaves. The interior lid with refreshed painted decoration of scrolls and dots. The hinges original. The interior painted earth red which is traditional.

The front with eight, panels reinforced with strap work and bolts. The panels are painted with stylized stems of peonies, chrysanthemums and poppies. Four landscape vignettes amongst stylized native flower heads and trailing stems. Twin hasp fittings to accommodate padlocks and carrying rod. The false escutcheon centered on the front surrounded by small, five petal flowerheads. The sides with six, panels reinforced with strap work and bolts and a repeat of the decoration on the front on a smaller scale. Retaining the original carrying handles which are very large demonstrating that the strongbox was made to accommodate bullion. Retaining original, fine, naïve stylized vignettes of flowers and trailing stems. Southern German, Nuremberg, fourth quarter of 16th century.

Provenance: Private Collection, Italy.