Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Anglo-Indian Quillwork Work Basket, Circa 1880

£345

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REF: 6424

Height: 11 cm (4.3")

Width: 28 cm (11")

Depth: 20 cm (7.9")

Description

A remarkable large Anglo-Indian work basket, dating to circa 1880, richly decorated with porcupine quills, ebony, and bone inlay. Made as an elegant receptacle for wool, needlework, or other domestic pursuits, it is an exceptional example of the inventive materials and detailed craftsmanship associated with late 19th-century Anglo-Indian decorative arts.

The basket's dark ebony ground provides a dramatic contrast for the pale bone inlay and finely arranged porcupine quills, whose natural translucency and subtle tonal variation create a distinctive surface pattern. The combination of organic materials gives the piece both visual intricacy and a wonderfully tactile quality. Its generous scale makes it an especially impressive example of the form.

Completing the design is a baleen handle, lending strength and graceful curvature while further highlighting the skill involved in the basket's construction. This use of varied and unusual materials is characteristic of Anglo-Indian objects made for the colonial and export markets, where local craftsmanship was adapted to European tastes for refined, useful, and highly decorative furnishings.

Originally intended as a work basket, it now makes a striking decorative object in its own right. It would sit beautifully in a drawing room, library, bedroom, or collector's interior, and would be of particular interest to collectors of Anglo-Indian furniture and decorative arts, 19th-century workboxes, and objects made from natural materials.

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