

COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Unidentified artist
(Pasto (Colombia), 17th century)

Barniz de Pasto Chest

wood, barniz de Pasto and silver mounts
25 x 12 x 18 cm.;
9 7/8 x 4 3/4 x 7 1/8 in.

Provenance

Private Collection.

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This chest based on a European model has a rectangular body and semi-cylindrical lid. All four sides and the convex lid are covered in a profusion of decorative elements. The structure of the chest is made of cedar wood, and the surfaces have been adorned with a range of motifs using Pasto varnish in a range of intense colours.

The front presents carnations or peonies arranged symmetrically on both sides of the keyhole, motifs taken from Oriental lacquerware. The petals of the flowers are edged with fine lines in black resin. Beautiful reds, oranges and yellows imitate the tones of the flowers, contrasting with the black background. The plant stems and some of the leaves are gold, and combine with the colours of the rocaïlle, which has been executed using the thinnest layers of *mopa mopa* resin. The flowers, meanwhile, are immersed in blue-green scrollwork and silver leaf, alternating between the different layers of Pasto varnish, and representing a lush tropical environment.

In the middle of the back of the chest, we observe a bird unfurling its wings, surrounded by a circle made up of beautiful blue, red, white and gold scrollwork.

The lid is decorated with peonies or carnations, like those seen on the front of the chest. In between the two hinges, what looks like a hummingbird opens its wings, while holding a little branch in its beak.

The sides feature the same floral motif surrounded by plant scrollwork and beautiful metallic colours. All the scenes throughout the chest are framed by gold and black borders.

The convex lid is attached to the body of the chest by long, finely-chased silver hinges. On the front we observe the lock with a round, chased silver keyhole and undulating edges resembling the petals of a flower. The latch features the same chasing work and design as the hinges.