

Antique Silver Niello Snuffbox With Racing Scene On The Lid

£420



REF: 31657

Height: 2.5 cm (1")

Width: 8.2 cm (3.2")

Depth: 3.2 cm (1.3")

Description

Antique Swedish Silver Niello Snuffbox - Horse Racing Scene.

An exceptional example of Swedish silver niello work, this antique snuffbox features a striking horse racing (steeplechase) scene on its hinged cover, complete with two finely detailed jockeys in action. The rectangular form with rounded ends is beautifully executed, with side panels and the underside decorated in a subtle fish-scale pattern, highlighting the craftsmanship and decorative style of the period.

The snuffbox is crafted from Swedish silver and is adorned with niello inlay, a traditional decorative technique where a black metallic alloy (typically sulfur, silver, copper, and lead) is fused into engraved recesses. This creates a dramatic black-on-silver contrast. Niello work has a long history, popular across Renaissance Italy, Victorian England, and in Thai, Russian, and Swedish silverwork, and was frequently used for jewelry, liturgical items, and utilitarian objects.

This piece is hallmarked with the Swedish "three crowns in trefoil", the national control mark for precious metals, along with the number 249, confirming its authenticity as Swedish silver. The hinged cover opens to reveal a gilt interior, offering a warm contrast to the bold exterior decoration.

A rare and collectible item, this snuffbox combines artistic niello craftsmanship and sporting-themed decoration, making it a superb addition to a collection of antique silver or horseracing memorabilia.