Finch & Co



WOODLANDS NATIVE AMERICAN MICMAC PORCUPINE QUILLWORKED BIRCH BARK BOX

A WOODLANDS NATIVE AMERICAN MICMAC PORCUPINE QUILLWORKED BIRCH BARK BOX AND COVER
MID 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 7.5CM HIGH, 10CM DIA. – 3 INS HIGH, 4 INS DIA.

LITERATURE

THE FRENCH EXPLORER CHAMPLAIN WAS THE FIRST EUROPEAN TO DESCRIBE PORCUPINE QUILL ORNAMENTS WHICH HE SAW BEING WORN AT AN ALGONKIN VICTORY DANCE IN 1603; ALL THE FEMALE DANCERS WERE..... 'WEARING BEADS AND BRAIDED CORDS MADE OF PORCUPINE QUILLS'.
HOWEVER, THE LONG ACCEPTED THEORY IS THAT QUILLED BARK MOSAICS ON BOXES WERE A CREATION OF THE FRENCH URSULINE NUNS IN 18TH CENTURY QUÉBEC AND THAT THE ART REACHED THE MICMAC VIA OTHER NATIVE PEOPLES AND THE FUR-TRADE, OR BY MICMAC PUPILS AT THE CONVENT SCHOOL FOR 'LES JEUNES SAUVAGESSES'. THIS IS CLEARLY NOT THE CASE AS THERE ARE RECORDS OF CANOES AND OTHER QUILLED BARK ITEMS BEING MADE BY THE MICMAC IN THE 17TH CENTURY. WHAT THE URSULINES DID ACHIEVE IN THE 18TH CENTURY WAS TO PIONEER A PARTICULAR TYPE OF EMBROIDERY USING STEEL NEEDLES FOR MOOSE HAIR AND QUILLED WORK AND ADAPTING NATIVE DESIGNS TO THOSE OF FRENCH RENAISSANCE TAPESTRIES.