A pair of early 18th century painted leather panels

Sold



REF: 1015

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Height: 150 cm (59.1")

Width: 70 cm (27.6")

Depth: 4 cm (1.6")

Description

A fine pair of early 18th century painted leather panels decorated with vignettes of Chinese courtiers in private palace gardens, interspersed with different arrangements of flowers shown in a variety of porcelain vessels, the leather furthered tooled and gilded and highlighted against a blackened background, in gilt frames with green craquelle mounts.

Panels such as these were often decorated with Chinese themes in imitation of Asian lacquer and in particular Coromandel lacquer, the technique of incised lacquer with the addition of colour and named after the Coromandel coast of East India.
As early as the middle of the 17th century, leather workers had settled in London in the St Paul's Churchyard area, many having learnt their skills in Amsterdam. In 1716 the London Gazette carried an advertisement from leather gilder Joseph Fletcher, proclaiming that he could provide 'leather hangings in the latest fashion of the Chinese style to cover walls, settees and screene.'

Leather screens were made from calf or goat skin. The leather was smoothed and covered in silver leaf which was then burnished and coated with transparent yellow japanning. The design was painted on top in oil paints and the backgound might be tooled, whereupon the whole panel was varnished. After 1740, leather screens made way for finely painted paper that was being imported from China for use as wallpaper.

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