Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Four Framed Sets of Chinese Carved Mother-of-Pearl Gaming Counters, Circa 1790

£245

Emmett & White Ltd
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REF: 7611

Description

An elegant group of four framed sets of late 18th-century Chinese mother-of-pearl gaming counters, finely carved for the export market around 1790. Each delicate counter is cut from the iridescent inner shell and intricately engraved with decorative borders, floral motifs, monograms, crests, or playing-card-style devices, their surfaces catching the light in soft shades of silver, pink, green, and blue.

Such counters were commissioned in China for European customers and used in fashionable card games, where they stood in for coins or stakes. Made primarily in the workshops of Canton, they were popular possessions in Georgian drawing rooms and were often supplied in elaborate suites. Their refined workmanship reflects the remarkable skill of Chinese export artisans, who transformed a natural material into objects of both practical use and social display.

Presented in four frames, the collection offers an especially decorative way to appreciate the individual carving and luminous material. The varied shapes and engraved detail give each group its own visual rhythm, while together they provide a compelling record of late Georgian taste and the flourishing trade between China and Europe.

Chinese export work, carved mother-of-pearl, circa 1790. Each set is framed for display.

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