Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Large Mid-Victorian Hand-Painted Papier-Mâché Floral Serving Tray, Circa 1850

£225

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REF: 7048

Height: 6 cm (2.4")

Width: 80 cm (31.5")

Depth: 60 cm (23.6")

Description

A large and richly decorative mid-Victorian papier-mâché serving tray, hand-painted with an abundant still life of flowers and dating to circa 1850. The composition is arranged with the exuberance and colour so characteristic of Victorian decorative arts, transforming an everyday household object into a work of considerable visual charm.

The tray's dark ground provides a dramatic setting for the hand-painted floral display, allowing the blooms, leaves, and stems to stand out with depth and vibrancy. Such painted decoration was a hallmark of the finest Victorian papier-mâché ware, valued for its glossy lacquered finish, lightness, and capacity to imitate more costly materials while accommodating detailed, highly decorative painted scenes.

During the mid-19th century, papier-mâché trays were popular features of well-appointed drawing rooms and dining rooms, used for serving tea, refreshments, or calling cards, as well as displayed upright on a stand as decorative objects. Floral subjects were particularly admired, reflecting the Victorian enthusiasm for botany, garden flowers, and richly furnished interiors.

Generously scaled and wonderfully decorative, this tray would make a striking addition to an interior, whether displayed on a stand, hung as wall decoration, or used as an occasional serving piece. A handsome example of Victorian craftsmanship, combining practical purpose with the opulent floral ornament of the period.

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