



sold: chinese export porcelain famille rose garniture from the Pronk workshop

Qianlong period circa 1740

Dutch Market

Height of beaker vases: 12¼ in; 31cm

A rare famille rose three piece garniture of two beakers and a bottle, decorated with flowers and butterflies, the edges framed in purple and the foot rim with Pronk-style green border.

Provenance: The Leo and Doris Hodroff Collection; formerly in the collection of Jim Williams of Savannah, Georgia.

This is a very rare garniture which was almost certainly made in the same workshop as the well known 'Pronk' items. The borders around the feet of the vases are very distinctive and also found on the rim of the known Pronk design 'The Arbour'.

The flower is the Snake's Head Fritillary (*Fritillaria meleagris*, Linn.) which is an endangered species found across Europe, though here it is blue and should be purple or white, the shape of the corolla and the leaves are characteristic.

The butterflies are also both European species :the complete insect is the Peacock butterfly (*Inachis io*, Linnaeus 1758) and the half insect is a Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*, Linnaeus 1758), drawn as if the wings are closed but the pattern shown is the dorsal surface rather than the ventral which would be correct. In both cases, as with the flower, the colouring has been altered somewhat.

Neither of the caterpillars of these species feeds on *Fritillaria* as both mainly feed on nettles, so the connection is a loose one and suggests that they may have been assembled from different drawings to make up this design, although such an error was common in the early insect books by artists such as Marie Sybille Merian and Eleazar Albin. Merian did a large work on the Insects of Surinam and another of Europe - and Albin did two volumes on European insects and spiders (this image is from neither of these though very similar in style).

Two other garnitures are known of similar shape, patterns and designs and must be from the same workshop.

The shapes are also very rare - a few other examples being known with similar 'Pronk workshop' designs on them in blue and white - and one pair of the bottle shape is known with standard Chinese peonies and rocks.

References: Wirgin 1999, p 175, a three piece garniture of the same shapes but with a design of redcurrants and moths on a black ground, the foot rim design similar to a Pronk border on the footrim of the basin for the 'Archer' cisterns