

Chest of Drawers Chest Commode Architectural Facade Enclosed
Renaissance Cedar

£16,200



REF: 11370

Height: 131 cm (51.6")

Width: 119.5 cm (47")

Depth: 63 cm (24.8")

Description

A museum quality, English, Late-Renaissance, cedar enclosed chest of drawers with exceptional snakewood, walnut & oak with an architectural or façade front

This is the most sophisticated English model of chest of drawers conceived as a cabinet piece with an architectural front intended to disguise the drawers. This chest exhibits the mastery of English Late-Renaissance, cabinet making combining woods prized for their exoticism, color and beautiful figuring with carving and moulding in different ornamental patterns to simulate materials found within an architectural façade inviting conversation, curiosity and awe. The architectural vocabulary and the use of snakewood which was a highly fashionable exotic timber would be decoded by the cognoscenti as a high status, sophisticated piece which would have been made for a significant interior. Cedar was much prized for its rich color, light figuring and lustrous patina and it is rare to find large pieces in cedar which is why the top has been made from narrow sections. The success lies in the skill of the cabinet maker in balancing proportions, combining layers and different patterns of inlaid, carved and moulded woods of different colors with finely, figured graining to create a striking, statement piece which, when new, would have been very bright and the contrast between the woods would have been dramatic and dazzling. This chest is in exceptional condition, the replaced handles and feet is common as these elements have been subject to so much use over 400 years. It is robust and suitable for everyday use.

In two parts. The cedar top has six vertical sections, crossbanded with a moulded edge with a simulated dentil cornice below.

The upper section is fitted with a shallow, long, top drawer conforming to the frieze of a building with four pairs of double corbels dividing it into three vertical sections. The central section has a large, beautifully figured, snakewood panel surrounded by walnut moulding. The two similarly ornamented sections either side have central snakewood panels surrounded by multi-layered, cedar 'H' shaped mouldings with shallow rectangular walnut inlay above, below and snakewood on the sides to create the visual effect of depth.

The second, deep, long drawer in the upper section continues the architectural theme of an upper story of the facade with four cedar capitals and tapering pillars continuing the division into three vertical sections. The central section is headed by a rectangular, cedar section containing the original, chased brass escutcheon with deep cedar moulding aligning with the pillar capitals. Below is a central, walnut arch surrounded by a large, tiered arch, simulating stone, in cedar with snakewood ends and applied snakewood lozenges. The two similarly ornamented sections either side elaborate on the geometric mouldings in the drawer above. They have small central panels of cedar within which the brass handles are mounted, surrounded by a multi-layered, cedar moulding with walnut edge and oak inlaid corners to create depth, surrounded by large, snakewood panels, canted to show the figuring to maximum advantage, within multi-layered, cedar 'H' shaped mouldings with shallow snakewood inlay above, below and...