

19TH CENTURY FRENCH SILVERED BRONZE HUNTING CASKET SIGNED AUGUSTE CAIN

$2,600

SKU: 242-551
Stock: N/A
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This exceptional antique French silvered bronze casket features intricate wildlife sculptures and richly detailed hunting motifs by renowned animalier sculptor Auguste Nicolas Cain (1821–1894). Crafted in France circa 1880, the oblong jewelry box exemplifies the naturalistic artistry and exceptional bronze craftsmanship associated with the French animalier school of the 19th century.

The hinged lid is crowned with a finely modeled pheasant standing proudly on a rocky base, its long sweeping tail, textured plumage, and lifelike posture beautifully rendered. The lid is further embellished with raised grapevine branches, clusters of grapes, and deeply sculpted foliage. The sides feature elaborate hunting scenes framed within oval medallions, including three rabbits nestled among vegetation on the front and game birds resting in a natural setting on the reverse. Additional grapevine ornamentation surrounds the casket, while sculptural tree branch handles extend from both ends. The composition rests on four openwork feet modeled as intertwined branches and leaves.

The hinged top opens to reveal an interior lined in rich red velvet, providing a striking contrast to the aged silvered bronze exterior. The pheasant's base bears the signature "A. Cain," identifying the celebrated French sculptor. The casket retains its original character with a beautifully patinated silvered finish, highlighting the depth and precision of the sculptural decoration. A key is included.

Auguste Nicolas Cain (1821–1894) was a prominent French animalier sculptor who studied under François Rude and Pierre-Jules Mêne, whose daughter he married. He exhibited regularly at the Paris Salon beginning in 1846 and became particularly celebrated for his realistic portrayals of wild animals and hunting scenes. His important public commissions include animal sculptures at the Château de Chantilly, the Jardin du Luxembourg, and the Tuileries Gardens in Paris. His work is documented in the Bénézit Dictionary of Artists.

Ideal for displaying on a library desk, dressing table, or collector's cabinet, this antique bronze jewelry casket is in excellent condition commensurate with age and use, retaining its detailed sculptural decoration, silvered patina, and velvet-lined interior.

Dimensions: 10" W x 5" D x 8" H

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