

PAIR OF MID-CENTURY ITALIAN CARVED AND HAND-PAINTED OAK CASSAPANCA BENCHES

$11,000

SKU: 253-148
Stock: N/A
Categories: Benches, Stools, Barstools & Ottomans

Add unmistakable Italian visual drama to an interior with this striking pair of Italian cassapanca-style benches, crafted circa 1960 and inspired by earlier Renaissance and Baroque seating traditions. Crafted of solid oak, each bench features a tall, sculpted back and broad seat supported by shaped pedestal legs, creating a bold architectural silhouette rooted in historic Italian furniture forms. The high backs are richly decorated with hand-painted scrollwork, foliate motifs, and acanthus-inspired ornament, centered by an elaborate heraldic medallion. Each painted cartouche incorporates symbolic imagery including celestial elements and classical heraldry, framed by scrolling forms that recall the exuberant decorative language of Italian ecclesiastical and palazzo furnishings. The painted surfaces display a softly aged patina, with layered tones of muted green, ochre, blue, red, and warm yellow, intentionally evoking the appearance of earlier painted furniture. The term cassapanca derives from the Italian words cassone (large chest) and panca (bench). Originating in the Middle Ages, the cassapanca evolved when a storage chest was fitted with a high paneled back, becoming a “chest-bench” and serving as an important precursor to the sofa. During the Renaissance and Baroque periods, cassapanche were often elaborately painted and carved, functioning not only as seating but also as decorative canvases for artists. These surfaces frequently featured coats of arms, allegorical figures, and illusionistic decoration, a tradition sometimes referred to as illusionist furniture, rooted in the broader trompe-l’œil practices of Italian decorative arts. This mid-20th-century pair is executed in the traditional cassapanca form, faithfully reinterpreting these historic precedents while remaining decorative, sculptural, and highly usable. The benches are in good condition commensurate with age and use, with surface wear and patina consistent with their intended aesthetic and vintage character. Ideal for placement in an entry hall, along a gallery wall, at the foot of a bed, or in a retail or hospitality setting, these benches offer both functional seating and strong visual impact. Dimensions (each) 68" W x 19.75" D x 39" H Seat height: 19"

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