



#### TROMPE-L'OEIL LIDDED BOX

Russia, end of 19th century. Stamped: Fabergé.

The inside, gilt. Rectangular box with hinged cover. Imitation of a mail parcel with pasted label, customs stamp, and parcel string. The bottom engraved with two identical coats of arms of the Russian Empire. The cover bears a dedication by the Brothers Popov to Oscar II, King of Sweden and Norway, on the occasion of the General Art and Industrial Exposition of Stockholm in 1897.

L 14.5 cm, 665 g.

Provenance: Swiss private collection. The design of the trompe l'oeil lidded box makes reference to the role and importance of the brothers Konstantin and Simeon Popov from Moscow.

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In June 1842, Konstantin Popov opened a tea store in St. Petersburg, which he expanded in 1843 with a branch in Moscow in the prestigious Tretyakov House on Kuznetsky Bridge. Importing Chinese tea directly and starting his own tea plantations locally made it possible to bypass middlemen and also expand into Old World countries - for example Germany, Belgium, England and France. Popov's participation in various industrial and trade exhibitions increased the fame and notoriety of Popov's tea imports, which were highly regarded for their quality. The company not only became a supplier to the Court of the Tsar and was subsequently allowed to bear the national coat of arms, but also supplied a number of other ruling houses in Austria, Greece, Romania, Belgium, Persia, and Sweden.

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