



Indian Lacquered Cabinet

India (Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh), 19th century

Carved wood, painted with silver and lacquered

190 cm high (including stand and crown), 106 cm wide, 40 cm deep

Stock no.: A6155

Provenance: UK private collection, held in a famous country house.

A wooden cabinet or armoire, painted with silver flowers and then lacquered, giving the appearance of gold. Such furniture was made in the city of Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh. The most common form of furniture produced in this area was the small chest on a stand. Cabinets of this style are much more unusual.

Bareilly was a stopping point between Calcutta and Delhi, renowned for its manufacture of western-style furniture.¹ Little is known of the cabinetry industry in Bareilly, but furniture from the city appeared in the British sections of international exhibitions, including The Great Exhibition of 1851 where 'a lacquered box, made at Barreily' was shown and the Exposition Universelle of 1867, where 'from Barilly, articles of furniture, japanned or lacquered' were presented.²

The combination of black and gold lacquer has often led to their misidentification as Chinese. Some examples even feature Chinese landscapes, indicating that craftsmen had access to Chinese export furniture. See, for example, a chest in the Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore (no. [2014-00422](#)).

A chest on a stand in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (no. [02326:1, 2](#)), dated to ca. 1879, has similar floral decoration but on a white rather than a black background. A rare example of a Bareilly cabinet, though with drawers rather than two doors, in the same collection (no. [01222\(IS\)](#)), has similar floral decoration.

[1] Jaffer, Amin. *Furniture from British India and Ceylon. A Catalogue of the Collections in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Peabody Essex Museum*. New Delhi: Timeless Books . The Victoria and Albert Museum, 2001, p. 268.

[2] Paris Universal Exhibition of 1867. *Catalogue of the British Section in English, French, German, and Italian*. London: 1868, p. 278.