



Victorian Silver And Hardstone Vinaigrette



2 800 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Other

Height : 6 cm.

Description

Victorian silver and hard stone vinaigrette. Barrel-shaped, the silver mount, the baluster body composed of curved panels of polychrome agates of different varieties. The lid is decorated with a quartz cabochon. The interior features a finely chiseled vermeil openable grid decorated with leafy scrolls. English work, probably Scottish, 19th century. h. 6 cm. Vinaigrettes, not to be confused with salad dressing, are small precious containers, which appeared in the 18th century and were fashionable until the 19th century, intended to contain aromatic vinegars or volatile salts. Originating from both utilitarian and aesthetic use, these miniature boxes were used to mask unpleasant odors - omnipresent in cities before the advent of hygiene standards - and to revive ladies suffering from "vapors" or fainting

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spells, real or strategic. Often made of silver and/or gold, sometimes decorated with enamel, hard stones or finely chiseled motifs, they consisted of a hinged lid, an openwork grid and a small sponge soaked in scented vinegar (lavender, bergamot, etc.). They were kept in a pocket, a handbag (or reticule), hung from a belt (chatelaine), or even worn as a pendant, close at hand in case of illness or to assert coquettishness. Highly personalized, they quickly became fashion items, reflecting the taste and rank of their owner. Some took the form of miniature bags, jewelry, or even rings or ornate magnifying glasses. Initially simple and discreet, they transformed into luxury objects with elaborate decoration, combining functionality and aesthetics. It is important to distinguish vinaigrettes from salt bottles, generally made of stoppered glass, which contained ammonium carbonate with a pungent odor. If the salt bottles were more medicinal, the vinaigrettes were above all so-called "objects of virtue", symbols of elegance, refinement and today of great interest to collectors.