PROANTIC
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Antique Silver Reliquary. José Vilaplana. Valencia, Spain. C. 1920



2 900 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Sterling silver

Width : 18.3 cms - 7.2 in

Diameter : 14 cms - 5.5 in

Height : 48 cms - 18.9 in.

Description

This magnificent reliquary, crafted in Valencia around 1920 by the renowned silversmith José Vilaplana, is a deeply elaborated devotional piece distinguished by its impressive height, exuberant ornamentation, and high quality craftsmanship. Made entirely of silver, the object displays fine repoussé and chiseled work in each of its sections, confirming the mastery of Vilaplana's Valencian workshop, whose hallmarks are clearly visible on the back of the piece.José Vilaplana was a prominent Valencian silversmith and goldsmith active in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His workshop, located in Valencia, specialized in the production of liturgical objects in repoussé silver, notable for their technical excellence and rich ornamentation inspired by vegetal and religious motifs. The "J. Vilaplana"

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hallmark appears on numerous sacred pieces, including chalices, monstrances, reliquaries, and incense boats, many of which are still preserved today in parishes throughout the Valencian Community and in private collections of sacred art. His aesthetic combines neo-Gothic style with modernist influences, visible in the curved forms, floral motifs, and the use of colored glass gems, as can be observed in this reliquary.The general design of the piece follows a floral cross shape, crowned at the top by an ornate Latin cross that adds verticality and symbolic meaning. The center at the top is intended to house a relic, traditionally of the True Cross, though it is equally suitable for conserving relics of saints or blesseds. The viril retains its front glass, while the back preserves the original cavity, currently empty, making this an excellent opportunity for collectors or ecclesiastical institutions wishing to reintegrate it into liturgical use.The finely crafted floral decoration covers the entire upper structure with clusters of flowers and leaves symmetrically distributed among volutes and medallions. The lobed base, elevated on four curved and ornamented feet, features vegetal filigree elements with green glass inlays, creating a delicate color contrast against the silvered surface. This type of combination between silver and colored glass was highly valued in liturgical works of the early 20th century, a time when the rise of Spanish religious art boosted the demand for finely crafted ritual objects, especially in centers such as Valencia, Seville, and Toledo.The piece shows no visible structural defects and remains in excellent condition. The details remain sharp, with no loss in the repoussé work or signs of corrosion. The interior shows natural time patinas that authenticate its age without affecting its presentation. Its weight, 722 grams, provides ideal stability for display on an altar or in a showcase.Over the years, works signed by José Vilaplana have gained prestige in the international market for religious antiques due to the quality of their silver craftsmanship and their

authenticity as reflections of Spanish sacred art from the first third of the 20th century. This reliquary, with its aesthetics, proportions, and level of detail, represents an exceptional addition for a parish, sacred art collection, religious museum, or private devotional space. Perfect for reintroducing into the Church or for use in a parish.Dimensions: 48 × 18.3 × 14 cm (18.9 × 7.2 × 5.5 in). Weight: 722 g.