



Mounted Shell Court Jester - Nuremberg, 19th Century



2 900 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Sterling silver

Description

Figure of a court jester composed of a nautilus mounted in solid silver and set with colored cabochons. In his left hand, he holds a lapis lazuli sphere and in his right hand a mobile with 4 branches decorated with balls of the same stone as well as the shock absorber. (One ball is missing from the mobile). On the base, there are hallmarks including the letter N, from the city of Nuremberg. Nuremberg, 19th century. Height: 23 cm. The jester, or king's fool, is a comic character whose profession was to make people laugh. Kings had their own jester, the only character who could mock the sovereign without consequence, although satire always constituted a risk or even a peril for the artist. Jesters are also occasionally used by armies to wage psychological warfare. They ride in front of the

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troops, provoke or mock the enemy, and sometimes serve as messengers. They are also used to boost the morale of their own army by singing songs and reciting stories. Appearing during the Renaissance, the production of mounted nautilus is linked to the relationship between man and nature in vogue in the 16th century. Natural curiosities or Naturalia, become both a subject of study and collection. In order to enhance their brilliance, their preciousness or their rarity, the goldsmiths design and cast rich mounts, thus transforming the shell into a cup, a hat, characters or even animals. Preserved in cabinets of curiosities or chambers of wonders, they fascinate both yesterday and today. It is worth noting that the 19th century produced beautiful examples, particularly in Germany, of these objects. A similar model but decorated with rock crystal balls went on sale at Helios Auction in New York; February 16, 2025. Another amethyst crystal compound was presented at the exhibition "The World of François d'Ansembourg" in Brussels in 2022.