



Enameled Gold Shuttle - Paris, 1775



48 000 EUR

Signature : Maître orfèvre : Jean-Joseph Barrière (reçu maître en 1773)

Period : 18th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Gold

Description

Master goldsmith: Jean-Joseph Barrière (awarded master status in 1773) An exceptional gold shuttle, finely chased, re-pierced, and richly adorned with a remarkable polychrome enamel decoration.

Exhibiting exceptional craftsmanship, this piece illustrates the refinement achieved by Parisian goldsmithing in the early years of Louis XVI's reign. The body of the navette is adorned, on each side, with three enameled medallions in delicate pastel tones depicting pastoral scenes inspired by the galant style of the 18th century. One of the medallions depicts a young woman receiving a wreath of flowers, an emblematic theme of the bucolic aesthetic then in vogue at the French court. The central medallions are framed by an elegant laurel garland held in place by a knotted ribbon. They are connected by enamel fields

Dealer

Collection

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imitating agate, whose subtle shades lend depth and harmony to the composition. The re-pierced outlines are embellished with stylized roses, foliage, and turquoise-blue enamel, while the body is delicately openworked with a design of stars and finely chiseled scrollwork, revealing remarkable technical virtuosity. The hallmarks allow for particularly precise dating: Master goldsmith: Jean-Joseph Barrière, admitted as a master in 1773; Mark: Flower of the helmet (1768-1775); Guild mark: Letter-date M (1775-1776); Countermark: Helmeted head (1768-1775). These marks date the production of this snuff box to 1775, at the beginning of the reign of Louis XVI and shortly after Marie-Antoinette's accession as Queen of France. The painted decoration is fully in keeping with the pastoral style that was then immensely popular among the French aristocracy. The scene of the young woman crowned with flowers evokes the idealized representations prevalent at that time and, in its spirit, recalls certain contemporary iconographies associated with Marie Antoinette, though it is not possible to identify the depicted figure with certainty. Jean-Joseph Barrière's works are now held in several major public collections, notably at the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where his snuffboxes and luxury objects attest to the excellence of his workshop. Enameled gold navettes of this quality remain extremely rare and rank among the most prestigious creations of 18th-century Parisian goldsmithing. This snuff box is in exceptional condition, with the enamels having retained all their freshness and luster, which further enhances its historical, artistic, and cultural significance.