



## Ivory Memento Mori, 19th Century



2 200 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

### Description

A tiny ivory sculpture depicting a finely carved hand delicately holding a skull--a traditional symbol of memento mori--inviting silent reflection on the brevity of human existence. The gesture, marked by great restraint, prioritizes the intellectual over the theatrical. It reflects the sober moral aesthetic characteristic of early 19th-century Northern European works, intended for cabinets of curiosities and scholarly libraries. The deliberate disproportion between the hand and the skull is not the result of a naturalistic approach, but rather a symbolic choice: the skull is not depicted as a life-size anatomical object, but as a condensed idea, held and controlled by the human mind. The deliberately simplified anatomy, combined with the absence of any decorative embellishment, thus confirms its

### Dealer

#### Collection

Rare & Unusual Objects

Mobile : 0032475266745

Mons 7000

purpose as an object for private contemplation rather than a mere ornament. Given its miniature scale and freestanding design, the ivory hand may also have been conceived as a wearable object, one that could be pinned to a garment, serving as a personal memento mori rather than a mere static cabinet piece. The piece is presented on its original period base, made of bone and black-stained wood, typical of scholarly and symbolic objects from the early 19th century. The ivory hand is separate from the base and simply pinned to it, in accordance with the original mounting practices. It is preserved in perfect condition, showing only slight soiling and patina due to age, characteristic of antique works. The base is in good condition. Dimensions: Head: height approximately 3 mm, width 2 mm Hand: approximately 3.4 cm Total height with base: approximately 7.6 cm A rare cabinet piece with strong symbolic significance, representative of the culture of vanity and Northern European moral thought in the early 19th century.