



A Unique Amethyst And Gold Snuff Box From The Russian Empire, Saint Petersburg, Circa 1840

20 000 EUR



Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Width : 4

Diameter : 5.5

Height : 8

Description

A snuff box of exceptional artistic and collectible value, carved from a single block of natural amethyst and mounted with a gold lid featuring a hand-painted enamel medallion at its center. The body is carved from a monolithic stone exhibiting natural chromatic variations, where deep purple tones blend into lighter, milky areas, highlighting both the rarity of the material and the virtuosity of the gemstone carving. The lid is adorned in a rich Neo-Baroque style, chiseled and engraved with gold foliage scrollwork composed of rocaille motifs, waves, shells, and volutes, set against a dark blue enamel background. In the center is an oval enamel medallion depicting an allegorical scene in the academic tradition of the first half of the 19th century, featuring two women dressed in ancient style standing near an urn. The medallion

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is distinguished by the delicacy of its modeling, a restrained color palette, and a meditative atmosphere evoking memory, contemplation, and the inevitability of fate. The combination of solid amethyst, high-purity gold, and painted enamel constitutes a rare example of representational jewelry crafted in Saint Petersburg during the Historicism period. This snuff box was designed not only as a personal item but also as a status symbol intended for representative use and international circulation, as evidenced by the hallmarks. Hallmarks: Russian fineness mark "56" for gold; St. Petersburg hallmark (anchor); French hallmark of guarantee for import, in use from 1838; maker's mark partially worn or illegible, attributed to the workshop of Johann Wilhelm Keibel (active 1788-1862). Dimensions: Height 4 cm; width 8 cm; depth 5.5 cm. Weight: 163 g. Condition: Good overall condition. The amethyst is intact, with no chips or cracks. The gold setting shows slight signs of wear consistent with its age. The enamel is well preserved, with no missing areas or restorations. The hinges and clasp are functional. Provenance: Private European collection. Formerly Sotheby's, Russian Works of Art, Fabergé & Icons. ID-ANTQ-3408