



Antique Iberian-catalan Hessonite Earrings, 19th Century, Dame Joan Sutherland



20 000 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Gold

Length : 13 cm

Description

Magnificent antique, monumental Catalan Hessonite EARRINGS 'Arracades d'arengada' (13 cm) from the collection of Dame Joan Sutherland. For sale is a museum-quality pair of three-part earrings (Longs Pendants d'Oreilles) from the late 18th / early 19th century: a dream for collectors and lovers of opulent, historical jewellery art. These authentic pieces captivate with their extreme rarity and their unbroken, historic provenance. The story behind the jewels: from the Spanish aristocracy to the world stage of opera. To grasp the scale of these extraordinary earrings, one must travel back to Catalonia in the late 18th to early 19th centuries. Such monumental pieces, measuring 13 centimetres in length and weighing 35 grams of pure luxury, were never intended for the common people.

Dealer

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They were crafted exclusively for the women of Spain's highest nobility. They were worn at lavish celebrations and religious processions, where the fiery orange-red of the hessonite garnet created an almost magical aura in the flickering candlelight of the palaces. It was an unmistakable sign of extreme wealth, pride and status. Yet the story of this pair continues into the 20th century, straight into the spotlight of the world's greatest opera houses. The drop earrings captivated the legendary Australian opera diva Dame Joan Sutherland, known as 'La Stupenda'. She was world-famous for her penchant for monumental, historical statement jewellery. On stage at the Metropolitan Opera in New York or the Royal Opera House in London, she needed jewels that would emphasise her regal presence and sparkle all the way to the very back rows. Thanks to the ingenious three-part design (*Composés en trois Parties*), the diva was able to wear the earrings flexibly: during the day, whilst attending gruelling rehearsals, the central motif was simply pulled back so that the boucles could be worn in the shortened version (*Version réduite*). In the evening, for the grand premiere gala, the full, breathtaking splendour of 13 cm was then displayed. A piece of living cultural and jewellery history.

Details and condition:

- o Period: Late 18th century / early 19th century (Late Baroque / Georgian / early 19th century)
- o Provenance: Catalonia (Spain) | From the distinguished collection of Dame Joan Sutherland ('La Stupenda')
- o Setting: 91 natural hessonite garnets in a historically authentic, foil-backed setting (*Pavés de Grenats Hessonites*)
- o Special feature: Three-part articulated design, convertible to a shorter version (*Version réduite*)
- o Dimensions & weight: Monumental total length of approx. 13.0 cm | Total weight 35 gram
- o Material: High-carat yellow gold (fineness tested at between approx. 69% and 74% / equivalent to approx. 18 carats)
- o Condition: Excellent antique condition. Please regard the high-resolution photographs as an essential part of the condition

description.Important information & legal notices:Please note: Due to camera settings, lighting conditions during photography and varying screen settings, the colour of the hessonite garnet in the photographs may differ slightly from the actual item.Historical jewellery with a closed/foiled setting must not be cleaned with water, cleaning agents or in an ultrasonic cleaner, so as not to damage the original foil. This does not constitute a material defect, but is an inherent characteristic of jewellery from this era.