Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Early 19th-Century Shell Cameo Lovers Brooch

£145

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REF: 7252

Description

An Early 19th-Century Pinchbeck-Framed Carved Shell Cameo Brooch Depicting Lovers in a Woodland Scene, Circa 1830

A charming and finely detailed early 19th-century carved shell cameo brooch, dating to circa 1830. Set within an ornate pinchbeck frame, the oval cameo depicts a romantic scene of two lovers in a wooded landscape, rendered in delicate relief with an appealing sense of narrative and sentiment.

The carving makes elegant use of the natural layers of the shell, creating a softly contrasting scene that stands out beautifully from its ground. The couple are shown amid foliage and trees, a subject that reflects the Romantic taste of the period, when pastoral love, antiquity, and the beauty of nature were recurring sources of inspiration in art and jewellery.

Surrounding the cameo is a richly ornamented pinchbeck mount. Its warm golden tone and decorative border provide an effective contrast to the pale carved shell, giving the brooch both presence and refinement. Developed in the 18th century as a high-quality substitute for gold, pinchbeck was widely used for fashionable jewellery and retains a particular appeal in Georgian and early Victorian pieces.

Cameos were among the most admired forms of personal adornment during the first half of the 19th century, valued for their sculptural quality, classical associations, and capacity to tell a story within a small scale. This example is especially attractive for its unusual romantic subject, elaborate frame, and early date.

A beautiful and wearable example of Georgian-period jewellery, ideal for collectors of antique cameos, sentimental jewellery, and finely made early 19th-century accessories.

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