Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Italian Carved Agate Cameo Pendant of a Grecian Beauty in 18ct Gold, Circa 1850

£1,250

Emmett & White Ltd
Cross House, Waterloo Square, Alfriston, East Sussex BN26 5UD
01323 870 595 • info@emmettandwhite.com • emmettandwhite.com

REF: 7772

Height: 4 cm (1.6")

Width: 3 cm (1.2")

Depth: 1 cm (0.4")

Description

An exceptional mid-19th-century Italian carved agate cameo pendant, depicting the refined profile of a Grecian beauty. Executed with remarkable delicacy, the classical female portrait is carved in relief from a finely layered agate, the natural tonal contrast of the stone lending depth and luminosity to the image. Her idealised features, carefully arranged hair, and serene expression draw upon the enduring vocabulary of antique Greek and Roman portraiture.

The cameo is set within an ornate 18ct yellow gold mount, richly worked to frame and enhance the classical subject. The warmth of the gold provides a beautiful counterpoint to the subtle hues of the agate, while the elaborate surround gives the jewel the presence and grandeur expected of the finest mid-Victorian work. Both elegant and sculptural, it is a piece designed to be admired closely.

Italian cameo carving flourished during the 19th century, particularly among travellers on the Grand Tour, when jewels inspired by antiquity became powerful symbols of taste, learning, and cosmopolitan refinement. Cameos such as this were prized not only for their technical accomplishment, but also for their intimate connection to the classical world.

A jewel of exceptional quality and decorative appeal, this pendant would make a distinguished addition to a collection of antique cameos, Italian jewellery, or fine Victorian goldwork. Equally, it is a striking and wearable statement piece, combining the romance of classical antiquity with the craftsmanship and elegance of the mid-19th century.

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