Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

William IV Gold, Enamel and Natural Pearl Hairwork Memorial Brooch, Dated 1833

£245

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REF: 7035

Description

A deeply personal William IV memorial brooch in yellow gold, enamel, and natural pearls, dated 1833. Created to preserve a lock of hair beneath its glazed panel, this finely made jewel is a moving example of early 19th-century mourning and remembrance jewellery.

The rich yellow-gold setting is enhanced with enamel and a border of natural pearls, whose soft lustre gives the piece both delicacy and quiet formality. At its centre, the carefully arranged lock of hair provides an intimate and direct connection to the person commemorated. The 1833 date gives the brooch an especially poignant historical presence, transforming it from a beautiful jewel into a tangible record of an individual life and loss.

Hairwork jewellery occupied a special place in the sentimental culture of the Georgian and early Victorian periods. Hair was valued as a permanent, physical memento, and was often incorporated into rings, lockets, brooches, and bracelets to mark affection, bereavement, or family connection. Pearls were also closely associated with mourning, their pale colour and tear-like form lending particular symbolism to jewels of remembrance.

This brooch is a refined and evocative example of the genre, combining superb period materials with a profoundly personal purpose. It would make a notable addition to a collection of antique jewellery, Georgian and William IV mourning pieces, hairwork, or sentimental objects.

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