Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

18th-Century Carved Coral Leda and the Swan Brooch, Circa 1770

£2,450

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REF: 6761

Description

An exceptional and rare 18th-century carved coral brooch depicting Leda and the Swan, set in yellow gold and dating to circa 1770. Finely carved in high relief, this remarkable jewel transforms a classical myth into an intimate work of miniature sculpture, uniting the virtuosity of the carver with the richness of coral and gold.

The scene portrays Leda with the swan, Zeus in avian form, one of the most enduring subjects of classical mythology. The composition is animated yet delicately balanced, with the sensuous curves of the figures and the natural warmth of the coral lending the piece an unusual softness and vitality. Such mythological subjects were especially prized in the 18th century, when the classical world provided an inexhaustible source of inspiration for artists, collectors, and patrons.

The coral carving is framed by an elegant yellow-gold mount, which both protects and enhances the work. Its refined execution and highly unusual subject suggest an object made for a discerning owner, at a time when carved hardstones, coral, cameos, and miniature reliefs were valued as expressions of learning, taste, and connoisseurship.

Beautifully conceived and exceptionally evocative, this brooch has the presence of a small work of art as much as a jewel. It would be an important addition to a collection of 18th-century jewellery, coral carving, classical revival objects, or antique mythological art.

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