

Rare English Georgian hot air balloon brooch

£1,475



REF: 7359

Height: 4 cm (1.6")

Width: 2 cm (0.8")

Description

A rare English Georgian natural ruby, silver, and gold brooch in the form of balloon, circa 1784.

Brooches in the style of a balloon were made around this time to commemorate the launch of the first hydrogen-filled manned balloon in London on September 15th 1784 by Vincenzo Lunardi.

Ballooning in the UK began in the 1780s, inspired by French pioneers. In 1784, Italian aeronaut Vincenzo Lunardi made Britain's first successful manned balloon ascent from London, attracting huge crowds and royal attention.

Early balloons were hydrogen filled, risky and unpredictable, yet they captured public imagination. Scientific societies debated their military and meteorological value, while showmen toured cities offering paid ascents. Accidents and high costs limited progress, and practical applications remained elusive.

By the century's end, ballooning in Britain was more spectacle than science, but it laid foundations for later aeronautical experimentation and inspired future inventors and dreamers across generations.