Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Late 19th-Century Wrought-Iron Hanging Steelyard Balance

£25

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REF: 3517

Description

A striking late 19th-century wrought-iron hanging steelyard balance, a beautifully functional example of traditional weighing equipment. With its long lever arm, suspension rings, hooks, shaped weighing plate, and substantial counterweight, it has a strong sculptural presence and reflects the ingenuity of pre-modern trade and market practice.

Steelyard balances work on the simple principle of the lever. The object to be weighed was suspended or placed at one end, while the position of the counterweight along the arm established the measurement. The arrangement of rings and hooks allowed the balance to be suspended securely and adjusted for use, while the hand-forged iron construction was made to withstand regular commercial work.

The piece is rich in the visual language of 19th-century wrought iron: hand-shaped components, riveted joints, elegant curves, and a dark, naturally aged patina. Its unusual asymmetric form gives it far greater decorative impact than a conventional scale, making it as compelling today as an industrial sculpture as it was useful in its original working life.

Such balances were used by merchants, market traders, farmers, and shopkeepers to weigh a variety of goods before the widespread use of modern scales. Now, it would make a superb focal point in a kitchen, pantry, restaurant, shop interior, studio, or industrial-inspired home, and would appeal to collectors of antique scales, country-store fittings, and 19th-century trade objects.

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