Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Naples Grand Tour Lava Cameo Ring, Circa 1830

£425

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REF: 7442

Description

A rare and evocative early 19th-century Grand Tour lava cameo ring, made in Naples circa 1830 and set in yellow gold. The ring is centred with a remarkable suite of finely carved mythological cameos, each representing one of the seven days of the week through its associated classical deity.

Lava cameo jewellery was a distinctive souvenir of the Grand Tour, created in and around Naples from volcanic material gathered in the shadow of Vesuvius. Skilled local carvers transformed this unusually soft stone into miniature classical compositions, drawing upon the gods, goddesses, and antique imagery that captivated visitors to Italy. Its naturally varied tones, from soft grey and cream to warm brown, gave each cameo an individual character and made such jewels especially prized as wearable mementoes of travel, learning, and classical taste.

The sequence of seven mythological figures is particularly appealing. In the traditional classical scheme, the days of the week were linked with the celestial deities: the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, and the Sun. Arranged together within the warm yellow-gold setting, these miniature carvings create a jewel of unusual narrative richness as well as considerable visual charm.

A wonderfully romantic survivor from the Grand Tour era, this ring combines the drama of Neapolitan volcanic landscape with the enduring allure of classical mythology. It would make a distinguished addition to a collection of antique jewellery, Grand Tour objects, cameos, or early 19th-century goldwork.

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