Finch & Co

FRENCH CARVED IVORY PORTRAIT BUST OF VOLTAIRE

A FRENCH CARVED IVORY BUST OF VOLTAIRE (1694-1778) ON EBONY PLINTH
CIRCA 1800 – 1820
SIZE: 15CM HIGH - 6 INS HIGH (INCLUDING EBONY SOCLE)

LITERATURE

VOLTAIRE, (FRANÍ§OIS-MARIE AROUET) WAS ONE OF THE DOMINANT FIGURES OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT, DUE TO HIS SATIRICAL WIT, HIS ENORMOUS OUTPUT, HIS CAPACITY TO MOBILISE PUBLIC OPINION AND HIS RELATIONS WITH THE GREAT AND FAMOUS FIGURES OF THE DAY. HE WAS BORN INTO A LEGAL FAMILY AND EDUCATED BY JESUITS. AS A YOUNG MAN HE WAS QUICKLY INTRODUCED AT COURT AND BEGAN HIS LITERARY CAREER AS A DRAMATIST. IN 1726-1729 HE MADE AN IMPORTANT VISIT AND STAY IN ENGLAND, WRITING A HISTORY OF CHARLES XII AND THEN TURNING TO POLITICAL COMMENT WITH HIS 'LETTRES ANGLAISES' IN 1734. LATER HIS BRILLIANT AND SCATHING MORAL PHILOSOPHY 'CANDIDE' WAS PUBLISHED IN 1759. THE FAVOUR OF MADAME DE POMPADOUR AT VERSAILLES MADE HIM COURT HISTORIAN. IN 1750 HE WAS INVITED TO BERLIN BY FREDERICK II WHERE HE STAYED UNTIL 1753. HE USED HIS PRESTIGE TO SAVE THE LIVES AND REPUTATIONS OF THE CALAS AND SIRVIN FAMILIES, AND 1763 PRODUCED HIS 'TREATISE ON TOLERATION'. THE GREAT NATURAL PHILOSOPHER AND HUMANIST DIED IN 1778.