Finch & Co



EROTIC FRENCH PRESSED BURR WALNUT SNUFF BOX THE SCENE TO THE LID ENTITLED 'LES MONGAGNES FRANÇAISES JARDIN BEAUJON'

AN EROTIC FRENCH PRESSED BURR WALNUT SNUFF BOX THE SCENE TO THE LID ENTITLED 'LES MONGAGNES FRANÇAISES JARDIN BEAUJON' WITH TORTOISESHELL LINING REVEALING A SECRET PAINTED PANEL TO THE BASE DECORATED WITH A PRIAPIC BIRTHDAY PARTY

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 2CM HIGH, 8CM DIA. - ¾ INS HIGH, 3¼ INS DIA.

LITERATURE

FRENCH PRESSED WALNUT SNUFFBOXES ARE AMONGST THE MOST SOPHISTICATED OF ALL ANTIQUE WOODEN SNUFFS PRODUCED. AN EARLY EXAMPLE IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM DEPICTS THE TWO GREAT PHILOSOPHERS VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU IN PROFILE FACING EACH OTHER. THE TWO MEN DIED IN THE SAME YEAR AND THE BOX WAS SOLD AS A SOBERING 'MEMENTO MORI'. THIS EXAMPLE HOWEVER WAS MADE TO GIVE THE EFFECT OF PLEASURE, TITILATION AND AMUSEMENT.

MADE IN FRANCE BETWEEN 1800 AND 1820, THE MEDALLIONS WHICH DECORATE THESE BOXES WERE PRODUCED BY PRESSING THIN SECTIONS OF BURR MAPLE OR WALNUT BETWEEN STEEL DIES WHICH GAVE A HIGH RELIEF DESIGN. THE DETAIL WOULD BE SHARPENED BY SUBSEQUENT CARVING IF NECESSARY AND THE MEDALLION SET INTO A TURNED WOOD LID WHICH FITTED A SIMILARLY TURNED BODY LINED WITH TORTOISESHELL. BOXES WERE MADE WITH HIDDEN INNER LIDS, SUCH AS THIS EXAMPLE, WHICH WERE THEN PAINTED WITH 'LUSTFUL POSTURES' AND 'LICENTIOUS SCENES'. CARRIED BY THE 'RAKES' OF THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY THEY WERE SOLD IN FRANCE, ENGLAND, SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE SUFFOLK COLLECTION