Finch & Co



A LARGE GOLD MOUNTED CORAL SIGNET RING DEPICTING 'LEDA AND THE SWAN'

CIRCA 1850

A FINE AND LARGE GOLD MOUNTED CORAL SIGNET RING DEPICTING 'LEDA AND THE SWAN'

THE CARVED CORAL OVAL PLAQUE CARVED IN DEEP RELIEF

GOLD, MEDITERRANEAN CORAL (EAGLE HEAD HALLMARK FOR 18CT GOLD)

FRANCE

19TH CENTURY / CIRCA 1850

SIZE: 3CM HIGH, 3CM WIDE, 2.2CM DEEP - 1⅛ INS HIGH, 1⅛ INS WIDE, ⅞ INS DEEP

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LITERATURE

‘LEDA AND THE SWAN’ IS BOTH A STORY AND SUBJECT IN ART FROM GREEK MYTHOLOGY IN WHICH THE GOD ZEUS, IN THE FORM OF A SWAN, SEDUCES OR RAPES LEDA. THE SUBJECT WAS RARELY SEEN IN LARGE SCALE SCULPTURE IN ANTIQUITY, HOWEVER SMALL SCALE DEPICTIONS SUCH AS CAMEOS, ENGRAVED GEMS, RINGS AND TERRACOTTA OIL LAMPS ARE WELL REPRESENTED.

A BOOK PUBLISHED IN VENICE, IN 1499, ‘HYPNEROTOMACHIA POLIPHILI’ ILLUSTRATES THE EARLIEST KNOWN EXPLICIT RENAISSANCE DEPICTION IN A ‘WOODCUT’. PARADOXICALLY IT WAS CONSIDERED MORE ACCEPTABLE TO DEPICT A WOMAN IN THE ACT OF COPULATION WITH A SWAN THAN A MAN.

THE SUBJECT SINCE RENAISSANCE HAS NEVER BEEN ABANDONED AND CONTINUES INTO THE 20TH CENTURY WITH CY TWOMBLY’S ABSTRACT VERSION OF 1962, WHICH WAS SOLD AT CHRISTIES MAY 2017 POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY ART EVENING SALE FOR $52.9 MILLION DOLLARS.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE IRISH COLLECTION