

SA1050116

1820's Georgian pinchbeck
gold torpede chandelier
pendant decorated with
cannetille and filigree

Price

Sold

Item Reference: SA1050116

Date of manufacture: Georgian

Dimensions

Height = 44.5 cm (17.5")

Width = 6.2 cm (2.4")

Depth = 2 cm (0.8")

Description

Early 19th century Georgian pinchbeck gold earring fashioned into a pendant with a 20th century necklace and bale. Typical Georgian torpede form with an openwork body that is decorated with embossed scrolls and leaves on one side and cannetille flowers on the other. In the early 1700s a renowned clockmaker named Christopher Pinchbeck created an alloy of zinc and copper which bore a remarkable similarity to gold, and came to bear his name. Pinchbeck was not intending to deceive people into mistaking it for gold, but to act as a substitute for those not able to afford 18ct gold, as this was the only gold alloy available at the time, until the law changed in 1854 and lower purity of gold was allowed to be made. The lower value of pinchbeck jewellery also meant that it was safer to wear it when travelling. Unfortunately during the years following the development of the first pinchbeck many unscrupulous individuals did try to pass it off as gold, which led to the material being viewed as inherently duplicitous. Today genuine pinchbeck jewellery is highly valued and collectible in its own right, particularly pieces which come from the material's early use in the Georgian period.

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