



Antique Italian Micromosaic And Gold Brooch-Cum-Pendant And Earrings Suite, Circa 1870
£24,000.00

An antique Italian micromosaic and gold brooch-cum-pendant and earrings suite. The pendant has a gold bale, with granulated Etruscan style work, the micromosaic features a fly or beetle, with a green metallic abdomen and brown thorax, on a white background, in a circle, superimposed on a square, set sideways, with blue white and red micromosaics in the corners, with circles above and below, set with flower, blue and red micromosaics and flower trefoil micromosaics either side, with a wirework surround, with three pendant drops, featuring arrowheads and circles, set with blue, white and red micromosaic, with a shepherd hook on the back for the removable bale and a locket with purple fabric, with a pin and hook catch fitting. The earrings feature a similar, scaled down design, with the flies, in circles, on a square, with gold trefoils either side and below, with lozenge shaped tops, set with micromosaic, with a flower in the centre with a blue and white surround, with a red and white triangle border, circa 1870, in a Marchesini, Firenze Roma, fitted case.

Approximate Weight: Pendant 18.32g, earrings 10.33g

Mosaics are an ancient form of decoration, made of tiles, tesserae in Italian, from the Greek tessera, referring to their four sided shapes. Earlier mosaics were made of stone and glass. Micromosaic utilised enamel, made of fused silica, with minerals to produce the required colours. The shapes were circular or cubic and known as "loaves".

They flourished in the Roman, Byzantine and medieval periods. The Vatican Mosaics Studio was established at the end of the 16th century. It was responsible for the maintenance of the works of art in St. Peter's Basilica.

Production of micromosaics date from the end of the 18th century. Earlier designs were inspired by neoclassical allegorical themes, these were followed by flowers, animals and the well-known ruins of Rome. Due to growing demand of micromosaics the Workshop of St. Peter was set up, in 1795 as a branch of the Mosaics Studio.

The Pope presented some of the finest works to visiting diplomats and sovereigns. They began to circulate more widely and gained prestige among the wealthy and those on the Grand Tour.

Craftsmen who had trained in the workshops of the Vatican set up stands in the area surrounding Rome's Spanish Steps, where most of the tourists stayed, to sell their Grand Tour micromosaics. They sold ready-made pieces and took commissions. The majority of micromosaics are unsigned, although Gioacchino Barberi and Giacomo Raffaelli were master craftsmen who did sign their pieces.

The micromosaics were usually sold without frames and tourists went to jewellers to have them set in jewellery or decorative objects.

With thanks to Il Micromosaico di Luigina Rech – micromosaico.it translation by John Matthews

Origin	Italian
Period	Pre 1900
Style	Etruscan
Condition	Good
Materials	Gold
Dimensions	Pendant - length 87mm, width 41mm. Earrings - length 61.5mm, width 20.8mm

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