



**Agate snuff box with 18ct gold mounts c. 1790
£1,950.00**

A finely carved banded agate snuff or trinket box with 18ct gold mounts c. 1790.

Formed of beautifully carved transparent banded agate in shades of brown mounted with exquisitely chased gold mounts with a neo-classical frieze of flowers and fruit.

Gold boxes were among the supreme luxuries of 18th-century Europe, essential for any stylish manor woman.

Most were used to hold snuff (powdered tobacco), although some held small sweets or bonbons. They were presented as gifts to friends and lovers, and by monarchs to ambassadors and courtiers. The boxes also led to the language of the snuffbox, a phenomenon at European courts where specific gestures involving a box had hidden meanings - a secret code between individuals.

As well as boxes solely of gold, the 18th century saw the increased use of rare minerals in the construction of these boxes. Lapis, various agates and unusual marbles were incorporated and demonstrated the exceptional workmanship of lapidaries who were able to cut stones to heighten their transparency when held in the hand.

This example bears close similarities to works by JOSEF WOLFGANG SCHMIDT who was working in Vienna in the late 18th century.

Dimensions:

Length: 7.1 cm

Width: 5 cm

Height: 2.9 cm

Weight: 70 grams

Condition: The box is pre-owned, with minor signs of usage, good and pleasant condition overall.

Material and Technique	Agate
Origin	European Other
Period	Pre 1900
Condition	Excellent

Antique ref: Agate snuff box with 18ct gold mounts c. 1790