



Reliquary of contemplation £3,500.00

A reliquary pendant, circa 1680, depicting two saints in contemplative mode. The mount is high carat gold enamelled in vibrant red, green and white. The images are reverse painted on glass and under crystal. On the obverse is Saint Jerome, patron saint of libraries and librarians because of the task he is best known for, the translation, editing and assembly of what became the standard edition of the Bible. The objects placed in proximity to Jerome are symbols with recognisable significance. The skull represents the seat of thought and contemplation of death, the book the Bible and the cross, Christ. To reverse is the Penitent Magdalene, depicted with the same symbols. The images are darkly brooding, in the style of Caravaggio. Trust in the apotropaic powers of saints was strong in the late 17th century and devotional jewels like this were worn to protect the wearer. Religious statues miraculously wept, sweated and bled and people placed their faith in amulets and talismans. The pendant measures 1.5 inches by 1.5 inches. It is well executed and unusual to find a reverse glass painting from this era in such fine condition.