

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

Antique Edwardian silver & tortoiseshell jewellery box

William Comyns

Sold



REF: 7211

Height: 65 mm (2.56")

Width: 211 mm (8.31")

Depth: 153 mm (6.02")

Description

Antique Edwardian silver and tortoiseshell jewellery box with royal blue velvet interior. The tortoiseshell cover is beautifully decorated with fine inlaid silver in the form of a shallow bowl, resting on leaf supports and filled with a profusion of foliage sprays and floral-work. The top panel is surrounded by an applied border of silver bellflowers.

The technique used on this antique silver jewel box is called piqué, where gold or silver is inlaid into another material, in this case silver on tortoiseshell. Despite being expensive, the use of tortoiseshell in the decorative arts was very popular in 18th and 19th century Europe. Not only did it have a beautiful mottled appearance and was durable, but it was also lightweight and could be easily fashioned into other shapes; jewellery boxes and tea caddies were prime examples.

Tortoiseshell is quite malleable when heated, so when very fine gold, or in this case silver, was fashioned into delicate designs and then pressed into the warmed tortoiseshell, the silver then cooled and the shell contracted to hold the silver in place.