Antique American sterling silver overlay perfume bottle

Maker Not Recorded

£385



REF: 7749

Langfords
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Height: 150 mm (5.91")

Diameter: 100 mm (3.94")

Description

Hand-blown antique American glass perfume bottle overlaid with open-work silver banding and engraved floral decorations. The inclusion of a silver overlay is particularly appealing among collectors. The graceful, undulating curves that are typical of the Art Nouveau style are particularly well suited to this medium. Most of the bottles with silver overlay were crafted from clear glass, so examples that feature colour glass are among the most sought after of this genre.

In 1889, the decorative technique of applying sterling silver designs to glass was patented by Oscar Pierre Erand and John Benjamin Round for Stevens & Williams Ltd in Birmingham and silver overlay found its first wave of popularity in the early 1900s.

Sterling silver was applied to glass by a chemical method so that a cut-out design of silver metal appears against a clear or coloured glass background. Where the silver was thick enough a silversmith might further embellish the piece with hand engraving.

From 1895 to the early 1920s the art of silver overlay had a fervent following and became a decorative rage. It was particularly popular in America. The silver designers would choose patterns that complemented the piece, for instance this perfume flask is decorated with swirling flowers, where a waterscape of bulrushes might decorate a water jug, or a wine jug could feature intertwining grapevines.

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