LANGFORDS
Antique & Contemporary Silver

Pair neoclassical antique tortoiseshell & silver candlesticks

William Comyns

Sold

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REF: 6999

Height: 140 mm (5.51")

Diameter: 87 mm (3.43")

Description

A pair of lovely antique Edwardian silver and tortoiseshell candlesticks made during the early part of the 20th century. The tortoiseshell is in excellent condition; with silver inlaid in extremely fine neoclassical designs incorporating bellflowers, garlands, flower heads and swags.

Neoclassicism is the 18th and 19th century movement that developed in Europe as a reaction to the excesses of Baroque and Rococo. The movement sought to return to the classical beauty and magnificence of the Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire and based on simplicity and symmetry.

The technique used on these antique candlesticks 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.

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