

Bidders Eye up Jewellery

An early 19th century brooch painted with an eye is one of the more unusual lots going under the Charterhouse hammer in their two day 15th & 16th November auction.

“It is such a delicate little painting and whilst I have no idea who the eye relates to I would be very pleased to own it,” commented Richard Bromell. “Brooches are often overlooked at auction and whilst there is nothing of value in the brooch such as diamonds, it is nonetheless a totally captivating little piece of jewellery and art.”



Richard Bromell with the tiny early 19th century eye brooch in their November jewellery auction.

Eye miniatures are believed to have originated when the Prince of Wales (later George IV) felt the need to send Maria Fitzherbert, a widow, as a token of his love. This gesture and the romance that went with it was frowned upon by the court, so a miniaturist was employed to paint only the eye and thereby preserve anonymity and decorum. The couple went through a form of marriage on 15 December 1785, though all present knew the marriage was invalid by the Royal Marriage Act since George III had not approved. Reportedly Maria's eye miniature was worn by George IV, hidden under his lapel. This is regarded as the event which led to lovers' eyes becoming fashionable, appearing between 1790 and the 1820s in the courts and affluent families of England, Russia, France and more rarely, America.

Eye miniatures were also painted of a spouse, loved one or child and commissioned for sentimental reasons. Today eye miniatures are hotly contested at auction and

although the Charterhouse eye brooch measures just 2.5 cm wide it is estimated to sell for £200 - £400.

Charterhouse are now accepting further entries into this huge two day November auction of jewellery, watches and silver on 15th November followed by antiques and interiors with a selection of wine, port & whisky on 16th November.

To enter items into this auction, contact Richard Bromell and the team of specialists at Charterhouse, The Long Street Salerooms, Sherborne **01935 812277** or via email **info@charterhouse-auction.com** to arrange a home visit.

Charterhouse are also accepting entries for their auction of classic & vintage cars on Sunday 4th November and motorcycles on 3rd February, contact Matthew Whitney at Charterhouse for details.