LANGFORDS
Antique & Contemporary Silver

Pair American silver overlay vases

Sold

Langfords
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REF: 6800

Height: 160 mm (6.3")

Description

Pair of early 20th century American silver overlaid glass vases in the Art Nouveau style. The silver openwork decorations are formed with scrolling tendrils, foliage and flowers. The flower buds, leaves and flowerheads are hand engraved.

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. During this initial vogue, this very labour-intensive production technique meant high retail costs, but despite this from 1895 to the early 1920s the art of silver overlay had a fervent following and became a decorative rage. 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.

The fashion had declined by the mid-1930s but with the development of a more economical process, its revival followed immediately after WWII and lasted until the late 1950s.

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