

FOSTER & GANE

A plaster scallop shell sconce by Serge Roche (1898 - 1988)

£8,000



REF: 6083

Height: 37 cm (14.6")

Width: 17 cm (6.7")

Depth: 33 cm (13")

Description

Finely moulded in the form of a scallop shell with a white painted finish.

France, circa 1930

Provenance: A private Belgian collection. Originally one of a pair purchased directly from Serge Roche and made for a private Belgian mansion - thence by descent. The original owners knew Roche personally and commissioned him to make this pair. Sadly, only this one now survives

Condition: In fantastic condition. Some minor staining to the bottom right. Some crazing to the inside base of the shell. Small cracks around the joins of the hanging bar to the reverse. Rewired and PAT tested for the UK

Serge Roche was a highly influential figure in 20th century French decorative art, closely associated with the Parisian inter-war and post-war periods. His practice moved between interior design, sculpture and furniture and lighting design.

Operating within the elite Parisian circles of the time, Roche received commissions from haute couture houses, including the Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli, and aristocratic patrons such as French socialite and heiress Daisy Fellowes, contributing to some of the most refined interiors of his time. He had a strong affinity for historical forms, often reinterpreting fragments of rococo and baroque ornament within contemporary settings.

A defining aspect of Roche's work is the exchange between theatre and the applied arts. Roche's practice was strongly informed by scenography, where illusion and decorative artifice play a central role. In the 1930s and '40s, he became distinctive for his use of plaster as a sculptural medium: a material he had encountered in theatrical contexts, built up quickly in expressive forms and painted. Rather than treating plaster as a preparatory material, he elevated it into finished decorative objects, including mirrors, consoles and wall lights. Emphasising its malleability, he built up the surface in thick, hand-modelled layers that resemble weathered rock, creating grotto-like textures.