A pair of Indian Pambadam gold earrings.

Circa: Late 19th century

H. 5,5 x W. 4,2 cm

Hollow gold ; Total weight: 74,23 gr

South India, Late 19th century

The unique shape of these earrings represents an abstracted image of a cobra laying eggs on her nest. Amid the complex arrangement of geometric forms, one can discern two bulging eyes on a widespread hood. *Especially in rural regions of Southern India, where these earrings were commonly worn, snakes are simultaneously revered and feared. While they signal protection, their close association with water and the earth also makes them emblems of fortune and fertility.*

Literature

For a similar pair of earrings see The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip, Arts MIA, 92.132.2a,b