

A French late 19th century 'drop tassel' brooch.

Circa: ca. 1860

H. 5 cm (2 inches)

Gold (18k - 750) ; Total weight 8,5 gr

ca. 1860

An exquisite French brooch from the third quarter of the 19th century, exemplifying the period's taste for elaborate polychromatic jewellery combining precious materials with decorative enamel work. The piece is constructed around a central oval cabochon ruby of fine colour, held within a scalloped gold mount and surmounted by a natural pearl finial. The ruby is framed by an openwork cartouche of scrolling gold ribbons enhanced with black champlevé enamel and punctuated by rose-cut diamonds set en tremblant.

Three articulated pendants depend from the central motif, each comprising a natural pearl drop, an oval cabochon ruby in gold mount, and a diamond-set gold tassel terminating in a sharp point. The alternation of the warm pink tones of the rubies with the lustrous cream of the pearls, all set against the dramatic contrast of black enamel and bright gold, creates a particularly striking chromatic effect characteristic of Second Empire taste.