

FRANK PARTRIDGE

**A very fine Irish 18th Century design inlaid marble Chimneypiece in the
manner of Pietro Bossi**

Circa 1820

72 x 7 x 57 in high (1829 x 18 x 178 mm)

Internal opening - 46 x 44 in high (1168 x 1130 mm)

The frieze centred with a horizontal oval panel inlaid, against a simulated porphyry background, with red figures depicting Daphne and Apollo; the whole set within a laurel crown and a thin red line border. This is suspended by a ribbon bow looped through the top and which in turn suspend garlands of ivy leaves hanging from two more bows to either side. The terminal blockings inlaid with a laurel sprig and an oak leaf and acorn branch crossed and tied together with a blue ribbon. The jambs headed by a blue ribbon from which hangs a long ribbon terminating in a bell flower. Overlaid on this are laurel and oak leaf branches which descend the whole of the jamb and which cross and re-cross each other to form six loops, knotted at the bottom with a ribbon. Within the fourth of these, and tied by a knot in the ribbon, is an upright oval panel. That to the left jamb depicts a muse which are ancient classical figures that personify knowledge and the arts, especially literature, dance and music. That to the right shows Melpomene the muse of tragedy with her short sword. The whole standing on foot blocks of conforming shape to the jambs and surmounted by a moulded shelf breakfront above the frieze blockings.

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Peter Bossi:

Peter Bossi is believed to have been an Italian craftsman, working in Dublin from 1785 until 1798, when he was allegedly implicated in the revolutionary movement and forced to leave. The Dublin trade directories describe him as “inlayer in Marble and Stucco-worker” and list that he worked from No. 22 and later, No. 38 Fleet Street. It is said that Bossi jealously guarded the secret of his method and took every precaution against his work being imitated. In some accounts he is said to have been patronised by a wealthy Irish nobleman who attempted to discover the mysterious process. When Bossi realized that he was being spied on, he left the country immediately. Whether it was this or the revolutionary movement that forced him to go one will never be known. Certainly, it does seem a little unlikely that he was the only man at the time who understood the inlaying process since the style and method of making these mantelpieces is so similar to 17th century Florentine inlaid marble work. Such work was usually made by chiseling out the white marble ground in defined patterns and filling up the grooves with coloured marble compositions or earth pastes of various colours. The designs were Adam style patterns, usually of naturalistic leaves and flowers.