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Egyptian Alabaster Kohl Vessel

An ancient Egyptian Middle Kingdom alabaster lidded kohl vessel with broad, splayed lip, circular lid and flattened base.

Middle Kingdom.
Ca. 2040 - 1782 BC.
Height: 2 1/4 in. (6.5 cm).



Black galena (lead sulfide) based kohl (Egyptian: mesmedet) was not only used for beauty but also for religious, symbolic, and practical reasons as it worked as a natural disinfectant and protected the eyes from the bright sunlight. Alabaster was prized by the ancient Egyptians for its translucence and decorative veining, qualities which were further emphasized in the carving process.

Formerly in the collection of Jerome Eisenberg, New York.

inventory number: 9599

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