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THREE PIGEONS

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A LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY CARVED MARBLE STATUE OF ECHO,

'G. Fontana, SC 1892',

DIMENSIONS: 96cm (37³/₄"") High, 31cm (12¹/₄"") Wide, 35cm (13³/₄"") Deep

STOCK CODE: 76174



HISTORY

This statue depicts the mythological figure of Echo from Ovid's *Metamorphosis*.

Famous from the story of Echo and Narcissus, Echo (a mountain nymph) was punished by Hera, the wife of Zeus, after she tricked her. Hera consequently removed her ability to speak, after which point the only words Echo could say were the last words spoken to her. This meant that

when she saw and fell in love with the hunter Narcissus, she was unable to tell him, and so he rejected her before later falling in love with his own reflection. After this, broken hearted Echo physically fades away and remains just a voice, being heard but never seen again.

Here, therefore, we see Echo with one hand to her ear, as if listening for her own voice, leaning forward on tip toes dressed in a robe loosely draped over her body. Behind her left foot there is intricately sculpted, rough vegetation which provides a stark contrast to the smooth lines and fluidity of the material of her clothing which it merges with.

The sculpture bears an inscription that dates it to 1892 and as being by G. Fontana. Giovanni Giuseppe Fontana was born in Carrara in Italy, where he studied before leaving in 1849 for Paris before finally settling in London. He exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1852 to 1856, and worked up until his death.