PROANTIC
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On The Watch, Plate 12 From The Elle Series



700 EUR

Signature : Albert Besnard (Paris 1849-1934)

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Paper

Width : 305 mm

Height : 450 mm

Description

Etching on van Galder, from a print of 9 proofs, 1900. Signed lower right in pencil A. Besnard Son of a history painter from the Ingresque generation, Albert Besnard trained at the Beaux-Arts in Paris in the workshop of Alexandre Cabanel, then Sébastien Cornu. At the age of twenty-five, he won the Prix de Rome with The Death of Timophane, Tyrant of Corinth. During his stay in Rome, Besnard married, discovered and fell in love with the power of southern light. It was after a brief stay in London where he exhibited at the Royal Academy that the artist undertook a nine-month trip to India. He discovers there the richness and the oriental chromatic opulence which will irrigate most of his pastels and his bourgeois portraits. Quite different is the dark and tragic atmosphere that

Dealer

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emanates from his engraved work. An artist with a deep personality, Besnard does not deny his art the expression of his inner anxieties. It is through a dense engraved work, composed of two hundred etchings organized in sequence, that he manages to translate a very symbolic and dark vision of human existence. One of the most important was commissioned from him in 1900 by the collector Joseph Vitta (1860-1942) under the title of Elle, implying Death. The thanatological theme touches, over twenty-six allegorical scenes, the inner torments of daily life linked to Love. Passionate, charitable or erotic, death (symbolized here by the figure of the skeleton) acts as a revealing mirror of the absence or the presence of its forms of love and its painful consequences. Besnard manages to poetically illustrate the darkness of the soul which are envy, fear, abandonment, despair and destruction. Our board, the twelfth in the series, expresses well all the concerns and fear that love passion entails. In a flowery field, encapsulated death threatens with its scythe two young lovers whose bodies merge and unite under the power of their embrace. Splendid image with powerful graphic contrasts which oppose and combine at the same time light and darkness, softness and hardness, love and death, terrestrial and celestial world. This engraving reveals to us all the tragedy, certainly fatal, but here magnified, of existential antagonisms.