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Weikert Attr, Portrait Of Princess Josepha Of Liechtenstein



2 900 EUR

Signature : JOHANN GEORG WEIKERT

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Length : 46 cm

Height : 58 cm

Description

JOHANN GEORG WEIKERT, attr. toPORTRAIT OF PRINCESS JOSEPHA SOPHIE VON LIECHTENSTEIN (1776-1848), NÉE LANDGRAVINE ZU FÜRSTENBERG-WEITRA JOHANN GEORG WEIKERTWien 1743/5 - 1799 WienOil on canvas58 x 46 cm / 22.8 x 18.1 inches, with frame 69 x 57 cm / 27.2 x 22.4 inchesPROVENANCEAustria, private collectionIn April 1792, one of the most splendid weddings of the era took place in Vienna: Johann I Joseph of Liechtenstein (1760-1836) married Landgravine Josepha of Fürstenberg-Weitra (1776-1848). The significance of this union was underscored by the fact that the groom's elder brother, Prince Aloys I, left no heirs; it was precisely this branch of the Liechtenstein family

Dealer

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that ensured the continuation of the dynasty.According to extant documents, Princess Josepha was soon expecting her first child, born in September 1793. The portrait in question was likely executed in the interval between the wedding and the birth--probably between 1792 and 1793.Vienna's aristocratic society at the time, with its sumptuous balls and receptions, captivated Europe's attention. The French painter Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun, who sojourned in Vienna, repeatedly extolled the beauty and elegance of Viennese ladies in her memoirs ("Souvenirs"). Two characteristic excerpts in French are as follows, with translations:"On ne saurait se faire une idée de la prodigieuse quantité de femmes jolies qu'il y avait à Vienne; elles y surpassaient celles de Paris par la beauté, et je crois qu'elles étaient aussi coquettes que nous."(One cannot imagine the prodigious number of beautiful women in Vienna; they surpassed those of Paris in beauty, and I believe they were as coquettish as we are.)"La cour de Vienne m'a paru charmante; la vie y était fort animée, et l'on y donnait des fêtes superbes. Les dames, en particulier, se distinguaient par une élégance rare et un goût prononcé pour la parure."(The Viennese court struck me as charming; life there was very animated, and splendid balls were held. The ladies, in particular, distinguished themselves by a rare elegance and a pronounced taste for adornment.)Such portrayals of the Viennese elite find a clear parallel in the depiction of the young Princess Josepha. Her attire and coiffure--including a small scarf styled in the "Turkish" fashion introduced to Europe after the Russo-Turkish War (1787-1791)--attest to a prevailing enthusiasm for exotic influences, so much in vogue at the court of Emperor Francis II.The portrait is attributed to the hand of Johann Georg Weikert (1743/5-1799). Born in Vienna, Weikert studied under the court painter Martin van Meytens, an apprenticeship that significantly shaped his development as a master of portraiture and religious painting. His body of work includes

numerous commissioned portraits of the Viennese nobility, as well as church altarpieces and decorative works for the churches of the Austrian monarchy.During the period when both Josef Grassi and Giovanni Battista Lampi left Vienna, Weikert emerged as the leading portraitist in the capital. His style continues the tradition established by van Meytens--with a dramatic treatment of chiaroscuro and a restrained, predominantly monochromatic palette. Yet, his brief exposure to the work of Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun in Vienna left a notable mark on his art, as evidenced by the introduction of new compositional techniques. In this portrait, an almost entirely frontal composition--favored by Vigée Le Brun--provides a sentimental rendering of the young consort reminiscent of the French painter's stylistic nuances. Notably, the central focus is on the gaze of the young princess: the warm tonality of her face, the gentle transitions of light and shadow around her eyes, and the slight tilt of her head all contribute to an impression of vivid immediacy while simultaneously underscoring her elevated status. The presence of the "Turkish" scarf on her head and the subtly draped green shawl introduce a fashionable, exotic note, reflecting the widespread fascination with the Orient among aristocratic circles.The iconography of the princess is well known from several surviving portraits in the Liechtenstein collections, created roughly at the same time. The first is an exquisite miniature by Füger, in which the princess is depicted as a bride. The second portrait, in which she appears a couple of years older and which bears a compositional similarity to our work, is attributed to an unknown master, though stylistically it can be aligned with Weikert's oeuvre.Wladyslaw MAXIMOWICZBratislava, 2023