



**PROANTIC**  
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## Allegory Of The Air - Adriaen Van Stalbemt (1580-1662)

14 000 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting on wood

Width : 73

Height : 57



### Description

Oil on parquet panel - Antwerp school of the 17th century, attributed to Adriaen van Stalbemt.

Emerging from a cloud in the centre of the composition, a female creature holds a chameleon in her right hand. The reptile, known for its slowness and metamorphoses, is described by Pliny the Elder and then by the humanist Andrea Alciat in his "Book of Emblems" published in 1531: like courtiers, it changes colour with the wind and lives only on air, that is to say, on flattery. The many continental or exotic birds scattered on the ground, on the water or in the sky are all opportunities for Van Stalbemt to hammer home the idea of the air that carries them when they spread their wings. A worthy heir to the miniaturists of past centuries, he has a confident brush and surgical stroke, which offers the viewer

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a multitude of creatures with striking realism. The influence of Brueghel is evident in this composition, in particular that of Jan Brueghel the Elder with whom Van Stalbemt often collaborated.

With the seasons and human temperaments, the four elements represent the fundamental principles of cosmic order and natural life, they complete the doctrine of correspondences between microcosm and macrocosm, that is to say the analogy between man and the universe. Thus each element is linked to a season and a temperament: water corresponds to winter and phlegmatic mood; fire to summer and anger; earth to autumn and melancholy; air to spring and a sanguine character.

Originally, our painting was part of a series on the elements from which the Allegory of the Earth, probably lost, is now missing. But there remains the Allegory of Water and the Allegory of Fire that we present in the gallery. Ideally, these three paintings should be brought together in the same collection (see mood photo).

Our painting is sublimated by its powerful carved and gilded wooden frame from the 18th century.

Dimensions: 36 x 52 cm - 57 x 73 cm with the frame

Sold with invoice and certificate of expertise

Adriaen van Stalbemt (Antwerp 1580 - Id. 1662) is a Flemish painter who is part of the formidable epic of Antwerp artists who have magnified the art of landscape with the concern for a meticulous representation since the middle of the 16th century. The main episodes of his life are recounted by the biographers Cornelis de Bie (1627 - 1715) and Arnold Houbraken (1660 - 1719). In 1585, his Protestant family went into exile in Middleburg, where Van Stalbemt probably held his first brushes. In 1609, after the entry into force of the Twelve Years' Truce, putting an end to the conflicts between the Southern Netherlands and the United Provinces,

he returned to Antwerp. Admitted as a master to the Guild of Saint Luke in 1610, he was elected dean in 1617. Appreciated for his mythological, allegorical or religious scenes set in rich landscapes, he showed a real talent for painting elegant figures. Some of his colleagues would call on him to paint the figures for their compositions, first and foremost Jan Brueghel von Velours (1568 - 1625). A prolific painter, Van Stalbemt enjoyed real success and today, his works are admired in the greatest museums.

#### Bibliography:

- GIBSON, Walter S., *Mirror of the Earth: the World Landscape in Sixteenth-Century Flemish Painting*, Princeton, Princeton University press, 1989.
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- Collective work, *Die Flämische Landschaft 1520 - 1700*, exhibition catalogue at the Kulturstiftung Ruhr Museum in Essen (23.08 to 30.11.2003) and then at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (23.12.2003 to 12.04.2004).
- TAPIE, Alain, WEEMANS, Michel, *Fables of the Flemish landscape*, (exhibition cat. Lille, Palais des beaux-arts, October 6, 2012-January 14, 2013), Paris, Somogy, 2012.