



Marble Mascaroon Representing Bacchus - Italy - Late 16th Century



15 000 EUR

Period : 16th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Marble

Width : 44 cm

Height : 47 cm

Description

This white marble mascaroon represents Bacchus, the god of wine and theater in Greco-Roman mythology. Large in size, he is distinguished by his very playful expression, with a wide open mouth and large eyes whose pupils are not sculpted. This mask is faithful to the traditional iconography of the festive god and inspiration of the dramatic arts, in particular by the thick hair that ends in bunches of grapes, symbolizing wine and drunkenness. Bacchus is depicted with abundant hair, framed by vine branches and bunches of grapes, symbols of his power over wine and drunkenness. His face has marked features: a broad forehead, an expressive, almost frightening gaze and a wide open mouth, reminiscent of the ancient theatrical masks used on stage. This mask of Bacchus is reminiscent of

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11 rue de Beaune

Paris 75007

the theatre masks from the Roman villa of Chiragan, preserved at the Musée Saint-Raymond in Toulouse, dating mainly from the end of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 4th century AD. These marble sculptures, associated with the cult of Dionysus/Bacchus and the theatrical world, were part of the rich decor of this Gallo-Roman villa. They bear witness to the Greco-Roman cultural influence and the importance of theatre in the late Roman Empire. Inspired by ancient traditions, this mascarón is part of the Mannerist movement of the late 16th century. At that time, theatrical performances and sculpted decors were inspired by the ancient marble masks often used as ornaments in villas and theatres. This mascarón could have had a dual function: decorative, preaching a theatrical art, and symbolic, embodying Bacchus, god of the theater, guarantor of the transformation of actors and guide of the faithful towards a form of ecstasy and spiritual renewal. This mascarón could have been a wall ornament in a garden, possibly as a fountain mouth, projecting water through its mouth to fall below into a basin. A true testimony to the importance of the decorative arts of the end of the 16th century in Italy, this work impresses by its great expressiveness as much as it reveals the intoxication of human passions.