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The "black Archer": Rare 17th-century Dutch Engraving By Johannes Visscher C.1670



1 250 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Description

The "Black Archer": rare 17th-century Dutch engraving. Engraved by Johannes Visscher (c. 1633-c. 1712) after a design "drawn from life" by his brother Cornelis Visscher (1629-1658), published by Justus Danckerts (1635-1701). Engraving and etching on laid paper, sheet 342 x 284 mm, plate 338 x 284 mm. Circa 1670. Inscribed in the plate "Dus heeft den Moor met pyl en boogh / Den vyandt of het wilt in't oogh.", "C. de Visscher ad vivum deliniavit", "J. de Visscher sculpsit," and "Justus Danckerts Excudit," Hollstein 148 IV (of 4). The striking, individualized countenance of the 'Black Archer' suggests that Cornelis Visscher did not work from an imagined African 'type,' and the fact that he used a live model is made explicit by the

Dealer

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inscription next to his name ("C. de Visscher ad vivum deliniavit," i.e., "C. de Visscher drew this from life"). Nothing is known about the identity of the young African man depicted here, but Cornelis died in 1658, and so the drawing perhaps was made during the period when tens of thousands of enslaved people were taken to the Netherlands after the recapture of Brazil in 1654. There were, of course, many other routes by which this sitter could have arrived in Amsterdam, where Africans had long been in residence. The rhyming Dutch couplet at the foot of the print sets the scene, "Thus the Moor with arrow & bow has his eye on the enemy or wild [beast]." The 'Moor' carefully transfers an arrow from quiver to bow as he looks intently into the distance (an innovation and commonplace of 17th-century art is to place the action of an event outside of the picture itself). Sheldon Cheek, in his thoughtful analysis of the print, notes that there seems to be no literary source for this subject and that it is best seen as an early engagement with the concept of the noble savage.