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Georges Charles Comnenus - Portrait Of Marie-laure De Noailles - Dali - Picasso



5 300 EUR

Signature : Georges Charles COMNÈNE (1897-1986)

Period : 20th century

Condition : En l'etat

Material : Oil painting

Width : 60 cm.

Height : 73 cm.

Description

MARIE-LAURE DE NOAILLES Marie-Laure de Noailles (1902-1970) was an emblematic figure of French society during the Roaring Twenties. Renowned for her role as a patron of the arts and her support for avant-garde artists of her time, she distinguished herself from a young age with her bold temperament and passion for the arts. Married to Charles de Noailles, the vicomtesse quickly became a central figure in the Parisian artistic world for over a quarter of a century. Beyond her patronage, Marie-Laure de Noailles became a model of elegance and influence within artistic circles. She embodied the role of the modern, independent woman during an era marked by profound social transformations. Her love of beauty and innovation was evident through her art

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collections, her involvement in experimental films, her close ties with creators, and her own artistic practice. Marie-Laure de Noailles remains a significant figure in French cultural life, illustrating the importance of patronage and personal relationships in supporting artistic creation in the 20th century. So much so that it would be difficult to compile an exhaustive list of the artists and personalities who benefited from her support. However, some notable names include Francis Poulenc, Henri Laurens, Darius Milhaud, Man Ray, Jean Hugo, Luis Buñuel, the Giacometti brothers, Jacques Lacan, and Jean-Michel Franck.

PORTRAIT OR ALLEGORY

Our portrait is an intriguing and eloquent testament to the importance of Marie-Laure de Noailles in contemporary creation. Here, more than the facial features, it is the composition that allows us to discover the subject. However, let us note in passing that the painter chose to depict the vicomtesse as a blonde, a nod to a very famous photograph by Man Ray, in which our model appears almost haloed. Let us return to the painting. The artist has divided the canvas into two distinct and opposing spaces. On the left, the grandeur and splendor of aristocratic residences are striking--attributes of great families, including, of course, the Noailles and the Bischoffsheim. The grand gallery and canopy recall Marie-Laure de Noailles' lineage and marriage, her belonging to the aristocracy, and evoke the private mansion on Place des États-Unis. On the right, contemporary creation, modernity, and the tastes and patronage of Marie-Laure de Noailles are represented through several masterpieces. On a wall reminiscent of those in the Hyères villa, parchment-textured by Jean-Michel Franck, several artworks by great masters and close friends of Marie-Laure de Noailles are displayed--primarily Dalí and Picasso. Several paintings can be distinguished--either references to famous works by these painters or compositions reinvented by our portraitist, drawing from each artist's

repertoire. Notably: At the top left of the wall, Self-Portrait with a Slice of Bacon by Dalí. The Spanish surrealist had also painted a portrait of Marie-Laure de Noailles. Below, placed on the ground and partially cropped, is Two Women Running on the Beach, a seminal work by Picasso. A Still Life with Violins, a Portrait, a Head with Drawers, and an Eye on an Inseam complete the selection of works inspired by Picasso and Dalí. The portrait in the lower left evokes the work of Marie Laurencin, whom Marie-Laure de Noailles met at Desjobert's workshop, where they both practiced engraving. The link between these two worlds--between the gilded grandeur of the Ancien Régime and the most contemporary artistic creation--is, of course, Marie-Laure de Noailles herself. Dressed in a sumptuous ball gown, adorned with jewels, her head held high with regal poise, she is resolutely turned toward the future.

GEORGES-CHARLES COMNÈNE: GIFTED ARTIST AND CHARLATAN

The artist behind our painting was a curious figure in the artistic and social circles of the 20th century. Born in Alexandria on August 9, 1897, he claimed to be the grandson of Don Carlos VII, son of Charles XI of France and his alleged mistress, Polyxène Asklepiadis. He adopted the name Charles Louis de Bourbon, Duke of Santiago de Compostela, and it is under this name that he signed our painting! Aspiring to be the King of Spain, he even found some Carlist supporters who, in vain, tried to proclaim him King of Spain during World War II. Claiming also to descend from a Byzantine princess, he did not hesitate to use the name of the Comnenus dynasty. In 1971, upon publishing his book *The Legitimate King*, he took the title of Duke of Vendée and laid claim to the French throne under the name Charles XII--an act that gained no traction. He passed away in 1986. A talented painter and a bohemian prince, he traveled the world, gaining entry into high society. He surrounded himself with a small court, to whom he bestowed fictitious

titles. Unable to claim the French throne while also selling paintings, Comnène squandered the solid artistic training he had received. Bound by the falsehoods of his identity, he remained an amateur by necessity. He painted landscapes and portraits for his hosts and friends in a style uniquely his own, not without merit. Yet, just as he was a fraud in life, Comnène was also dishonest in his artistic practice. Bernard Buffet and Maurice Utrillo took him to court for forgery--the forger was convicted in 1964!