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Thyl Ulenspiegel Et Nele - Reduction Of The Monument To Charles De Coster

12 800 EUR

Signature : Charles Samuel (1862-1938)

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Bronze

Length : 66

Height : 61

Depth : 27



Description

Charles Samuel - Thyl Ulenspiegel and Nele (after the Monument to Charles De Coster, 1894)
Bronze, marble base, 66 x 61 x 27 cm Cast by Petermann, Brussels A moment of intimacy and defiance, frozen in bronze: Charles Samuel's reduction of his monumental homage to Charles De Coster distills the heart of a national myth into a chamber-sized lyric. In this smaller version, likely cast shortly after the unveiling of the original in 1894, we encounter the two emblematic protagonists of De Coster's *La Légende et les aventures héroïques, joyeuses et glorieuses d'Ulenspiegel et de Lamme Goedzak*, seated close together, sculpted with the same finesse, tenderness, and ideological conviction that marks the full-scale monument on the banks of the Ixelles Ponds. Thyl Ulenspiegel--the

Dealer

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Art of the 19th century- Animalier bronzes

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rebellious spirit of Flanders--is shown with youthful resolve, his lean figure clothed in simple garb, sword by his side, and his gaze projected outward, into history. At his side sits Nele, his faithful companion and conscience, barefoot and tender, her arm draped around his shoulder, her eyes searching his face in a gesture that is both loving and exhortative. She is not merely a muse or consoler, but the soul of the land--the *coeur de la mer de Flandre*, as De Coster famously wrote. This poetic inscription appears, too, on the veined green marble base: "...Est-ce qu'on enterre Ulenspiegel, l'esprit, Nele, le coeur de la mère de Flandre?" ("...Do they bury Ulenspiegel, the spirit, Nele, the heart of the mother of Flanders?")

The miniature faithfully reproduces the central sculptural group from the large public monument designed by Samuel in collaboration with architect Franz De Vestel--a bold choice at the time to commemorate not the author's portrait, but rather his literary characters. The original monument, erected in 1894 in Brussels' Ixelles, was the first public work in Belgium to enshrine fictional figures as national symbols. It expressed in bronze and stone the enduring ideals of freedom, resistance, and the Flemish identity--an embodiment of De Coster's radical humanism and Samuel's poetic realism. The bronze was cast by the Petermann Foundry, a leading Brussels atelier known for its technical mastery and artistic sensitivity. It was one of several editions made to circulate Samuel's vision beyond the urban landscape, allowing collectors and institutions to possess a fragment of this cultural legacy.

Though the exact number of casts remains uncertain, they were likely issued in limited numbers, each one bearing the hallmark of fine Belgian bronzework. Unlike monumental sculptures that tower or command from pedestals, this version invites closeness. Its scale lends it the intimacy of a scene witnessed in secret--an ode to heroism whispered rather than shouted. Every fold of Nele's dress, every tension in Thyl's brow, is a testament to Samuel's meticulous modeling

and narrative instinct. He offers not an allegory but a living tableau: le peuple en bronze. This piece is more than a decorative object--it is a portable monument, a condensed national myth cast in the noblest material. It speaks of liberty, love, and the moral clarity of storytelling in turbulent times.