



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Victor-jean Nicolle - A Coastal Town Imagined With A Waterfall

7 000 EUR



Signature : Victor-Jean Nicolle (1754-1826)

Period : 18th century

Condition : Restauré

Width : 36

Height : 28

Description

VICTOR-JEAN NICOLLE (1754-1826) AN IMAGINED COASTAL CITY WITH A WATERFALL Signed l.l. Nicolle Watercolour with pen & ink on laid paper Watermarked D&C Blauw 28 x 36 cm PROVENANCE: Private Collection, France The present work is an exceptionally large and inventive capriccio by Nicolle, who specialised in small-scale Italianate architectural views, particularly of Rome. Comprising borrowed architectural elements, likely taken from a sketchbook containing a plethora of such inspiration, this view shows the artist's fertile imagination at its best: a small amphitheatre stands behind a waterfall, with temples, aqueducts and colonnades dotted throughout a multi-tiered classical city on a coastline. It is possible that this work was never

Dealer

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intended for sale in the artist's lifetime: a small paper restoration to the lower right is considered by our conservator to be period, as the paper's chain lines are the same as the main sheet but running in the opposite direction, and it is unlikely therefore that Nicolle would have given the work to a client. Despite the repair, the work is a remarkable survival, and is a bravura display of the artist's creative ingenuity. Victor-Jean Nicolle trained in Paris at the École Royale Gratuite de Dessin, the free drawing school founded in Paris by Jean-Jacques Bachelier (1724-1806). Nicolle won the Grand Prix de Perspective in 1771, and after graduating he entered the architectural studio of Louis François Petit-Radel (1739-1806), who under the First Empire became inspector general of civil buildings and built the Roule slaughterhouse, among other accomplishments. Nicolle's architectural specialism and training was put to great use during his lengthy sojourns in Rome, which appear to have been between 1787-1798 and 1806-1811. Often filled with anecdotal detail, Nicolle's drawings from his Italian period are almost all rigorously accurate in their topography. They are, as such, important documentary evidence of the appearance of the Eternal City in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Like many artists in Rome before him, Nicolle was inspired by Hubert Robert's capricci, and drew a number of his own (of which the present work is an excellent example). Nicolle would generally make drawings 'sur le motif' in pen and ink, which he would then finish with watercolour in his studio. Although best known for his Roman views, he also produced drawings of other cities in Italy, including Bologna, Venice, Verona, Naples and Florence, while in France he made numerous studies of Paris and its environs. Although he never exhibited at the Salons, his reputation as a topographical artist was such that in 1810 he received a commission from Napoleon for fifty watercolour views of the principal monuments of Paris, intended as a

wedding present for the Empress Marie-Louise and now at Malmaison. Other significant groups of drawings by Nicolle are today in the Louvre, the Musée Carnavalet and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, as well as the museums of Rouen and Lille.