



PROANTIC
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Francesco Giuseppe Casanova, Travelers' Rest

2 700 EUR



Signature : FRANCESCO GIUSEPPE CASANOVA

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Length : 45 cm

Height : 28 cm

Description

FRANCESCO GIUSEPPE CASANOVA
THE TRAVELLERS' REST
FRANCESCO GIUSEPPE CASANOVA
London 1727 - 1803 near Mödling
Oil on canvas 28 x 45 cm / 11 x 17.7 inches, with frame 40 x 57 cm / 15.7 x 22.4 inches
FRAME French, circa 1800
PROVENANCE Possibly from the 1766 auction of the Marquis de Sorenzolo's collection, Brussels (Krafft sale, Lugt 1533)
FRANCESCO GIUSEPPE CASANOVA -- THE POETICS OF THE GALLANT LANDSCAPE
It is always a joy to make a small discovery. Quite by chance, at a modest French auction, two paired paintings caught my attention. They were presented as 19th-century works, but a single glance was enough to recognize the unmistakable hand of an outstanding 18th-century artist: Francesco

Dealer

Wladyslaw Maximowicz Fine Arts

Portrait miniatures-painting

Tel : +421908351092

Mobile : +421908351092

Domkarska 13

Bratislava 82105

Giuseppe Casanova. Francesco Giuseppe Casanova (1727-1803), the younger brother of the famed memoirist Giacomo Casanova, was born in London but spent his childhood in Venice. After a brief apprenticeship with Giovanni Antonio Guardi and Antonio Joli, he became a pupil of Francesco Simonini, the celebrated painter of battle scenes. In 1751, on the advice of another brother, Giovanni, he left for Paris, where he studied under Charles Parrocel. After Parrocel's death, he spent a year in Dresden, studying the battle paintings in the Saxon Electoral Gallery. By 1758, Casanova had settled in Paris and began working as an independent artist. His first exhibitions met with little success, but following favorable reviews by Denis Diderot, he quickly gained popularity among aristocratic patrons. In 1763, he became a full member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. It was Diderot himself who recommended Casanova to Catherine the Great, securing for the artist prestigious commissions for the Hermitage. Thanks to Diderot's endorsement, Francesco Casanova became one of the most sought-after painters of his era. His style reflects a rare and refined synthesis of late Rococo and emerging Classicism. He was greatly admired by royal patrons--most notably King Stanislaw August Poniatowski of Poland--but above all by Catherine the Great, who became not only his most important client but also a devoted collector of his works. The two landscapes presented here -- The River Crossing and The Travellers' Rest -- are expressive and highly characteristic examples of Casanova's early period, painted during his time in Paris between 1762 and 1770. The influence of Charles Parrocel is clearly felt, particularly in the compositional structure and treatment of the figures. Yet Casanova brings a softer, more lyrical tone to the scenes. These are theatrical, yet not pompous depictions of everyday life -- full of air, movement, light, and quiet nobility. They also represent a rare example of original pendant compositions, conceived to

echo each other in theme and visual rhythm. Of particular interest is the possible provenance of these works. Paintings with very similar subjects and nearly identical dimensions appeared in a sale held on 5 May 1766 in Brussels, conducted by Jan Lauwryn Krafft. The catalogue lists, under lots 297 and 298: "Deux Pendants, des Cavaliers à cheval." Each is described as: Haut. 1 pied 6 pouces, Larg. 1 pied (approximately 48.7×32.5 cm). Although the catalogue descriptions are brief, the pair structure and attribution to Francesco Casanova are noted. The consignor is listed as the Marquis de Sorenzo, a Venetian nobleman--an origin that strengthens the case for a direct link to the artist himself. The catalogue is recorded under Lugt number 1533, preserved in the Provenance Index Sales Files (AAP), accessible via Art Sales Catalogues Online, and also available digitally through INHA. While there are no inscriptions or archival labels that definitively confirm the identity of these paintings, the structural and thematic similarities, matched format, and historical context make the attribution highly plausible. This is one of those rare cases where a convincing connection can be drawn between surviving works and documented sources from the 18th century.