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Antique Enamelled Miniature On Copper With Musketeer Figure, 19th Century



350 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Diameter : 4 cms - 1.57 in

Description

Enamelled miniature of excellent craftsmanship, made on a circular copper plaque and mounted in its original gilt metal frame, dated to the second half of the 19th century, approximately between 1850 and 1880. It depicts a male bust-length figure dressed as a musketeer of the 17th-century French court, clearly alluding to the legendary knights of the king. The image shows the character turned to the right, with curly hair, moustache and goatee in Baroque style, wearing a wide-brimmed hat adorned with feathers, and a ceremonial sash crossed over his crimson cape. The composition, contained in a 40 mm diameter medallion, focuses on the serene face of the gentleman, emphasised by a neutral background that enhances the elegance of the ensemble. The technique used is miniature painting in vitrifiable

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enamel, applied with great precision on a copper base. A remarkable technical mastery is evident in the modelling of the face, with soft tonal gradations, chromatic harmony and clean details. The predominant colours, such as deep garnet, vivid red, the white of the lace, and the ochre hues of the hat, remain bright and unaltered. The scene directly evokes the romantic aesthetic of the mid-19th century, in which historicist, neo-Baroque and nostalgic themes were highly appreciated, especially among the cultured European bourgeoisie. The original period gilt metal mount shows surface wear perfectly consistent with its age, adding character without compromising structural integrity. On the reverse, classic bent metal tabs secure the enamelled plaque, in a fastening system typical of the time. The miniature is unsigned, which prevents direct attribution, but in terms of quality and style, it can be placed within the Central European or French school, possibly related to workshops in Limoges, Vienna or Berlin. Pieces like this were very popular in refined 19th-century settings, where evocative scenes from the past were combined with impeccable technical execution. Today, their appeal remains intact; this miniature is an excellent option both for starting a collection of enamelled portraits and for enriching an already established one. It would also look perfect in a display case or decorative corner with classical inspiration, adding a note of distinction, warmth and romanticism. A charming piece that preserves its original essence and faithfully represents the evocative taste of 19th-century Europe. Do not miss the opportunity to add to your collection an artistic gem of great expressiveness and magnificent state of preservation. Measurements: 6 cm (2.36 in) with frame, 4 cm (1.57 in) visible. History of the Enamelled Miniature Enamelled miniatures on copper have a long tradition in Europe and achieved notable diffusion in the 19th century. During this period, coinciding with the expansion of the bourgeois classes and romantic taste, there was a true boom

of historicist portraits, many of which evoked characters from the past, real or literary, for decorative or symbolic purposes. This trend was particularly strong in France and Germany, where schools such as Limoges and the workshops of Vienna kept alive the tradition of hand-painted enamel. The enamelling process is delicate and laborious. It requires multiple layers of vitrifiable enamel, successively fired in a kiln at high temperature to achieve the shine, depth of colour, and durability that characterise these pieces. While some miniatures served as personal portraits or family keepsakes, others like this were rather idealised recreations of historical types, designed to adorn interiors or form part of private collections. "Musketeer" type characters were particularly popular following the success of Alexandre Dumas' novels, such as *The Three Musketeers* (1844), and became a symbol of heroic romanticism and nostalgia for the nobility of past eras. Enamel painting, with its almost jewel-like precision, was the ideal medium to capture this idealised vision of the past. Today, these miniatures remain highly valued both for their visual beauty and for the cultural context they represent.