



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Giuseppe Bossi Attr. - Allegory Of Glory (or Of Italy?), C. 1810



1 150 EUR

Signature : Giuseppe Bossi attr

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Length : 15.5 cm

Height : 19.5 cm

Description

GIUSEPPE BOSSI attrib. to ALLEGORY OF GLORY (OR ITALY?) GIUSEPPE BOSSI Busto Arsizio 1777 - Milan 1815 Pen and brown ink with sepia wash on paper 19.5 × 15.5 cm / 7.7 × 6.1 inches, with antique frame 31 × 25.5 cm / 12.2 × 10 inches PROVENANCE Private collection, France Giuseppe Bossi was one of the most refined and intellectually engaged figures of the Lombard Neoclassical movement. Born in 1777 in Busto Arsizio and tragically cut short at the age of only 38, his artistic legacy is both rare and deeply emblematic of the cultural and political aspirations of Napoleonic Italy. Trained at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts and active in Rome from 1795 to 1801, Bossi dedicated himself to the study of classical antiquity and anatomical drawing. In Rome, he befriended

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Antonio Canova, who would later sculpt a bust of the young artist. In 1802, during a visit to Lyon, Bossi met Jacques-Louis David, although he preferred a softer, more lyrical approach to classicism. Upon his return to Milan, Bossi became secretary of the Brera Academy (1802-1807), where he played a pivotal role in reforming the structure of the Milan, Venice, and Bologna academies under Napoleonic directives, alongside astronomer Barnaba Oriani. He was effectively the founder of the Pinacoteca di Brera, enriched through artworks acquired from suppressed monastic institutions. In 1805, for Napoleon's visit to Milan, Bossi exhibited several important works including *Aurora and Night*, *Oedipus and Creon*, and *The Italian Parnassus*. Commissioned by Prince Eugène de Beauharnais, he made a detailed copy of Leonardo da Vinci's nearly ruined *Last Supper*, which was later reproduced in mosaic by Giacomo Raffaelli and placed in the Minoritenkirche in Vienna. Another painted version by Bossi is now housed in Brera. A passionate collector, Bossi amassed books, casts, prints, coins, and antiquities. Most notably, he owned Leonardo's original *Vitruvian Man*, a symbol of Renaissance harmony and scientific idealism. He was also the author of influential theoretical works such as *Del Cenacolo di Leonardo da Vinci* (1810), which deeply impressed Goethe, *Delle opinioni di Leonardo intorno alla simmetria de' corpi umani* (1811), and *Del tipo dell'arte della pittura* (1816, posthumous). His diary (1807-1815) remains a vital source on artistic life under Napoleonic rule. The present drawing, executed in delicate sepia wash, depicts a seated female figure lifting a laurel wreath--an unmistakable symbol of Glory. Surrounding her are playful putti, including one offering her a second wreath from the branches of a tree. The balanced, serene composition and fluid handling of ink place the work firmly within the Lombard neoclassical tradition. There is reason to suggest that this drawing may represent not only Glory but also an

Allegory of Italy--a subtle visual merging of civic ideals. At the height of the Napoleonic era, the concepts of national Glory and the rebirth of Italy were intimately intertwined. Bossi, a committed patriot, shared this vision with artists such as Canova, Appiani, Parini, Foscolo, and Manzoni. In this context, the figure may embody both the ideal of artistic achievement and the emerging cultural identity of a modern Italy. This refined drawing belongs to that rare category of works in which symbolic ambiguity enriches visual elegance. Behind its graceful line lies a quiet but resonant statement of national pride and neoclassical humanism--both deeply central to Bossi's brief yet brilliant career.