



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Portrait Of The Countess Of Castiglione, Franz Winterhalter (follower Of)



4 000 EUR

Signature : Winterhalter

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Length : 74

Width : 60

Description

Presumed portrait of the Countess of Castiglione. Attributed to a follower of Franz Xaver Winterhalter (19th century). Oil on canvas, trompe-l'oeil painted frame with gilded decoration. Signed lower left: "F. Winterhalter" (apocryphal signature). Dimensions: 74x60 cm. This refined portrait depicts an elegant young woman, richly adorned, contemplating a medallion that she delicately holds. She is wearing a white dress with a deep neckline, revealing the curve of her neck and the top of her chest in a graceful posture that clearly evokes the art of seduction. Draped in a loose brown satin shawl, she is carefully coiffed: her light brown hair with golden highlights is tied back in a chignon decorated with a red ribbon and a rose. Her deep gaze is fixed on the medallion--presumably a portrait of a

Dealer

Antiquités Frédéric Sportis

Antiquaire généraliste du 18ème siècle au 20ème siècle.

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man--suggesting an intimate attachment. The work is presumed to depict Virginia Oldoini, Countess of Castiglione (1837-1899), a fascinating figure of the Second Empire. Born into the Piedmontese aristocracy, she was sent to Paris by Cavour to seduce and spy on Napoleon III. She quickly became famous not only for her beauty but also for her dissolute life and the luxury of her lifestyle, which ruined her lovers and her husband. Between 1856 and 1895, she had herself photographed by Pierre-Louis Pierson in hundreds of carefully orchestrated poses, prefiguring the practices of self-portraiture and contemporary performance. Among her most famous features, her eyes were described as changeable--green, blue, or violet depending on the light--fascinating for their enigmatic depth. In the present portrait, the eyes appear dark blue, which, although less iridescent than historical descriptions, remains plausible in the pictorial context of the 19th century. Similarly, the light brown hair with golden highlights, although slightly darker than the blondness described in contemporary sources, remains consistent with an idealized pictorial interpretation. The style of the work--soft fabrics, soft skin tones, bust-length composition against a neutral background, restrained expression--is directly inspired by Franz Xaver Winterhalter (1805-1873). A native of the Black Forest, Winterhalter became the great portraitist of the European courts. In Paris, he was closely associated with the courts of Napoleon III and Empress Eugenie, for whom he created several masterpieces that encapsulate the splendor of the court. It is therefore very likely that he met the Countess of Castiglione, who was close - even very close - to the Emperor, on numerous occasions, notably at balls, receptions or stays in Compiègne. However, this historical proximity between the protagonists does not imply that the portrait presented here is by her hand. Although signed "F. Winterhalter", the execution does not correspond to the stylistic criteria of the master: it is the work of a painter

working in the spirit of Winterhalter, faithful to the spirit and elegance of his work. The anonymous artist who created it was able to capture the elegance, the hushed sensuality and the power of romantic evocation which made the legend of the Countess. Condition: Very good state of preservation.