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## Claude Bonnefond (1796-1860) -- Portrait Of A Young Greek Woman From Ischia



11 500 EUR

Signature : Claude Bonnefond (Lyon, 1796 - id., 1860)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 54 cm

Height : 65 cm

### Description

Oil on canvas. 65 x 54 cm. Signed lower left. To be compared with the 1830 painting \*A Sorceress Telling the Fortune of a Young Woman from the Island of Ischia\*, owned by the Louvre Museum and exhibited at the Musée National du Château de Compiègne. This superb portrait by Claude Bonnefond depicts a young woman wearing a voluminous red headscarf, shown in an elegant three-quarter profile in the spirit of neoclassical "study heads." Her gaze is turned to the viewer's left, her right hand resting under her chin in a thoughtful and introspective pose imbued with softness. The composition is set against a dark, neutral background that isolates the figure and draws all attention to her face and attire. A soft lateral light illuminates her complexion, reveals the volumes of the drapery, and brings the texture

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of the paint to life through a subtle interplay of light and shadow. The color palette is dominated by warm tones: the deep reds of the fringed headscarf contrast with the dark green of the ornamented jacket, while a slightly open white collar hints at the simplicity of popular clothing. The ensemble evokes the rustic elegance of a Mediterranean island such as Ischia, while clearly drawing inspiration from traditional modern Greek headdresses. This portrait reflects the philhellenic fervor that swept through Europe in the wake of the Greek War of Independence (1821-1830). In this context, artists and travelers sought to portray the figures of the new Hellenic world, blending orientalism with political commitment. A pupil of Antoine-Jean Gros and connected to the Lyonnais circle, Bonnefond contributed to this movement through a series of portraits combining classical precision with a romantic fascination for Mediterranean types. The finesse of the drawing and the elegance of the profile recall the art of Ingres, while the tactile rendering of fabrics and the natural pose suggest a more modern sensitivity. Positioned between neoclassicism and romanticism, the work marks a transition toward the delicate realism characteristic of the artists of the 1830 generation. Conceived as a salon portrait, *\*Jeune Grecque d'Ischia\** captivates through its simplicity and intimacy. Far from grand historical scenes, it offers a glimpse of individuality, a silent presence. The slight lowering of the eyelid, the hand resting beneath the chin, suggest reverie, a discreet melancholy -- perhaps an echo of a troubled past, of exile, or a country at war. In essence, this portrait encapsulates the philhellenic ideal of its time: the elegance of academic drawing placed in service of an emotionally charged subject -- at once exotic, noble, and profoundly human.