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Amedeo Modigliani - Autograph Letter Signed To The Astrologer Conrad Moricand.



35 000 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Width : 13

Height : 18

Description

Amedeo MODIGLIANI (1884-1920) Autograph letter signed to the astrologer Conrad Moricand. One octavo page on graph paper. (Paris). November 8, 1916. An extraordinary and moving letter from Modigliani, gracefully and melancholyly poetic, writing for the sake of writing, chatting under the moon. November 8, 1916. The full moon on the 9th. Dearest Astrologer I am writing to you to say nothing. I continue, I will continue. I am writing for the sake of writing. Farewell. Modigliani. On the back of the letter, a note in Moricand's hand indicates the route to Rue de l'Odéon, to Adrienne Monnier's bookstore, Modigliani's regular haunt. Bohemian aristocrat and astrologer from Montmartre, Conrad Moricand (1887-1954) held open house at his home in Pigalle, frequented by his painter and

Dealer

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writer friends. Author of numerous treatises on astrology and occult sciences, leading a bohemian life, Moricand befriended many Parisian artists, including Max Jacob (who wrote the preface to his book *The Interpreters*), Anaïs Nin, Blaise Cendrars, Henry Miller, and Modigliani. Between 1916 and 1918, Modigliani produced several sketches of Moricand as well as two oil paintings depicting his bust. This letter, which might at first glance appear to be the product of a Modiglianian delirium or drunken night, nevertheless suggests a symbolic intention on the part of the artist, given the specialty of the recipient, Conrad Moricand. Numerous drawings and testimonies confirm Modigliani's keen interest in signs and the occult sciences. Olivier Renault, in his book *Ton devoir réel est de sauver ton rêve* (Mille et une nuits, 2020), states on this subject: "Modigliani became interested in hermeticism and mystical alchemy at a very early age. According to his mother, at the age of fifteen, a slightly older friend introduced him to spiritualism." The precise position of the moon, indicated at the top of this letter, is reminiscent of a similar note he inscribed on the side of a portrait by Max Jacob in 1915: "the waxing moon." In addition to a fraternity between the two artists, undoubtedly heightened by the fact that they were both born on the same day (July 12), Max Jacob was a vital link between Modigliani and Conrad Moricand, as it was he who wrote the preface to the astrologer's 1919 book, *The Interpreters*. Max Jacob, of course, also frequented, like Conrad Moricand (as the back of this letter confirms), the *Maison des Amis du Livre*, the bookstore opened by Adrienne Monnier in 1915, which would become a major literary center of the time. More generally, the popular enthusiasm for space and astrology is not unrelated to the passage of Comet Halley on May 19, 1910, which sparked a resurgence of superstitions worldwide. Modigliani alluded to this the day before in a letter to his friend Paul Alexandre: "The comet (until at least ten minutes

to 6) is not arriving. Terrible!"Moreover, the phrases used here by Modigliani, "I am writing to you to say nothing" and "I am writing to write," could just as easily imply possible innuendos from the painter, implicitly encouraging Moricand to analyze his writing, in the hope of being able to read in it the promise of a more benign future, after a year that marked the painter's breakup with Beatrice Hastings, a British poet and art critic whom he met in 1914. These phrases also give this letter its poetic power, echoing the well-known passion of the man who knew Dante's Divine Comedy by heart and recited poems while walking the streets or working. However, at the time of writing this letter, Modigliani did not yet know that it would be ten days before he met Leopold Zborowski, one of the greatest dealers of his time, who would become one of his faithful friends, at the first "Lyre and Palette" exhibition, organized by Emile Lejeune and Blaise Cendrars, from November 19 to December 5, 1916, in Montparnasse. This letter, hidden behind a veil of apparent mystery, actually allows us to glimpse some very rich aspects of Amedeo Modigliani and his work. It reveals all the poetry of a fiery and dreamy artist, whose very calligraphy seems to transcribe all his passion and boldness.