



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Good Boullogne, Attributed To, The Death Of Alexander The Great

1 900 EUR



Signature : BON BOULLOGNE, attribué à

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Length : 50,5 cm

Height : 41 cm

Description

BON BOULLOGNE, attributed to THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT WITH HIS GENERALS AND THE PERSONIFICATION OF IMMORTALITY BON BOULLOGNE Paris 1649 - 1717 Paris Grey paper, black chalk and brush with ink, with wash and white heightening 50.5 × 41 cm / 19.9 × 16.1 inches; with frame: 73 × 65 cm / 28.7 × 25.6 inches One of the defining features of French painting in the second half of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century was its rapid transformation. The generation of artists of the Grand Siècle looked eagerly to Italy, where Rome -- under the spell of Pietro da Cortona -- remained the principal point of attraction. Cortona's baroque language, with its fluid movement and dramatic interplay of light and color, had a

Dealer

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profound impact on Charles Le Brun and, through him, on subsequent generations of French painters, among whom Bon Boullogne held a distinguished place. Bon Boullogne, known as Boullogne l'aîné, was baptized in Paris in 1649 and died there in 1717. The most gifted son of the painter Louis Boullogne, he won the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1669 and spent five years in Italy. In Rome he absorbed the art of Raphael and the Bolognese masters, and he became renowned for his ability to imitate and reinterpret celebrated works. He also studied Correggio and Carracci in Lombardy, forming a style that combined the grandeur of the Roman tradition with the refined sensibility of Bologna. Returning to France, he was admitted to the Académie Royale in 1677, later becoming professor and painter to the king. His reputation for brilliant color and his mastery of drawing secured him important commissions at Versailles, Trianon, and the Invalides. This large and monumental drawing, depicting the death of Alexander the Great, was once attributed to the school of Le Brun, which correctly points to its French origin. Yet its rare interpretation of the subject, clearly intended for a discerning patron, and its free and artistic handling -- speaking of the virtuosity of the master -- correspond closely to Bon Boullogne's practice. Especially telling is the use of grey paper, black chalk and ink wash heightened with white, a technique he particularly favored and in which he excelled. Comparable sheets by Boullogne reveal the same vigorous energy, the same subtle balance of contour and shadow, and the same virtuoso control of the medium. These observations allow us to cautiously attribute the drawing to Bon Boullogne l'aîné, making it a rare and valuable testimony to the transformation of French artistic culture at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The composition itself is conceived in a way that recalls the classical theme of the Pietà: mourning warriors bend over the body of Alexander, whose naked figure becomes the focal point of the narrative. Such an approach, unusual for an

ancient subject, inevitably evokes the iconography of the Descent from the Cross. The artist's ability to balance between heroic elevation and sensuous fragility turns the image into an almost Christian meditation on mortality and the tragic end of the hero, making this drawing a particularly striking example of the intersection of antique and Christian traditions in late seventeenth-century French graphic art. Provenance Austria, private collection