



Initial "n": The Annunciation, Illumination On Vellum, Paris, 1520-1530



5 600 EUR

Period : 16th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Vellum

Width : 18 cm

Height : 19 cm

Description

This exquisite illuminated miniature, produced in France in the mid-16th century, delicately and richly depicts the scene of the Annunciation. The image is set within a large historiated initial, likely the letter "N." Framed by elaborate foliate scrolls, birds, hybrid creatures inherited from medieval bestiaries, and stylized foliage, the Archangel Gabriel addresses the Virgin Mary in a Renaissance interior rendered with strong perspectival depth, beneath the gaze of God the Father depicted in the heavens. The classical architecture, enhanced by marbled surfaces, gently rolling landscapes, and measured theatricality, situate the composition firmly within the refined taste of the second third of the 16th century. The work stands out for its luminous palette, dominated by deep reds, greens, and

Dealer

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blues, as well as the generous use of gold that accentuates the drapery, architectural elements, and borders. The drawing is both precise and fluid, with particular attention given to the figures' expressions and gestures, imbued with softness and grace. The influence of Parisian illumination--infused with Italian and Netherlandish elements--is evident in the rigorous composition, the quality of the pigments, and the overall refinement of detail. This miniature reflects the enduring vitality of French manuscript illumination in the 16th century, at a time when, despite the rise of print, the art of the hand-painted book retained its prestige and devotional role among aristocratic and ecclesiastical circles. Exceptionally well preserved, the piece bridges the world of medieval tradition with the emerging spirit of Renaissance humanism. Its format identifies it as an initial from the finest manuscripts of the period, namely the antiphonaries, Catholic liturgical books compiling the Gregorian chants of the canonical hours.