



**PROANTIC**  
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

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## Victor-jean Nicolle, Animated View Of The Interior Of The Colosseum, Circa 1800

7 500 EUR



Signature : Victor-Jean Nicolle (1754 - 1826)

Period : 18th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Water color

Width : 30,8 cm

Height : 20 cm

### Description

Animated view of the interior of the Colosseum, circa 1800 By Victor Jean NICOLLE (Paris 1754 - 1826) Watercolor, pen and brown ink, signed lower left. Presented in a later giltwood frame.  
Dimensions: 20 x 30.8 cm Provenance: - collection of Madame la baronne Félix Oppenheim, according to a handwritten inscription on the back; - collection of Madame Jeanne Solari; - lot 64 of the sale of 14/11/2000 in Nice, by Ph. Palloc-Th. Courchet & R. Fede; - French private collection. This charming animated view shows us the interior of the Colosseum at the end of the 18th century. A group of people are chatting in the front row, near fallen stones, while others seem to be wandering around this high place of ancient history. Under the leadership of Pope Benedict XIV, the use of

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the Colosseum as a quarry was banned in 1749. A Stations of the Cross was installed to consecrate this place where the first Christians were martyred, and the structure of the Colosseum was reinforced. According to a handwritten inscription on the back of the frame, this watercolor came from the collection of Baroness Félix Oppenheim, who brought together a formidable collection of works by Victor-Jean Nicolle at the beginning of the 20th century. This collection was dispersed during several sales, the most important of which took place at the Hôtel Drouot on November 21, 1929. This sale was the subject of a catalog and a beautiful preface presenting the work, too often overlooked, of Nicolle. As the author of this preface indicates, "what artist has better captured the multiple, varied, beautiful and captivating aspects of the Eternal City than Nicolle, and even the most popular ones?" [...] If we were to compile a collection of Nicolle's Rome, it would be one of the most precious and most complete documents that French art has left on this city, inexhaustible in beauty of every kind. » Victor Jean Nicolle was a French painter and draftsman from the second half of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th century. He first trained as an architect with Nicolas Malhortie at the École royale gratuite de dessin in Paris, which enabled him to obtain a grand prize for perspective in 1771. He then entered the studio of Louis François Petit-Radel, where he discovered the art of Piranesi. Through his training, he showed a pronounced taste for architectural representations and classical ruins, which led him to travel to Italy twice, from 1787 to 1799, and again from 1806 to 1811. He was one of the sixteen artists sent by Louis XVI to Italy to capture live views of Rome and other regions of the country. He produced numerous views of Rome, Naples and Venice, and acquired a certain renown under the Italianized name of Nicolli. Nicolle's success continued under the Empire. Empress Josephine owned several works by this artist, including six

views of the castles of Malmaison, Saint-Cloud and Saint-Leu, purchased in 1808. Finally, Emperor Napoleon commissioned him, in 1810, to paint a series of fifty watercolors reproducing the main Parisian monuments, which he wished to offer to Empress Marie-Louise as a wedding gift. His work is characterized by representations that are both meticulous and poetic. The topographical accuracy with which Nicolle transcribes the urban panoramas of the late 18th and early 19th centuries is of incomparable topographical and documentary interest. Watercolor in very good condition, which has retained the vivid brilliance of its colors.