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Jean Martin (1911 - 1996), Saint Veronica, 1951 (tempera And Gold Leaf On Panel)



2 400 EUR

Signature : Jean MARTIN (Lyon, 1911 - Oullins, 1996)

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Painted wood

Width : 71 cm

Height : 87 cm

Description

Tempera and gold leaf on panel. 87 × 71 cm.  
Signed with monogram, titled, dated and inscribed Paris on the reverse. Born in Lyon in 1911, Jean Martin belonged to a generation of artists shaped by the spiritual and aesthetic upheavals of the post-war years. Trained in his native city, he settled in Paris in 1945. From 1953 onwards, after a long study of Byzantine art, he devoted himself almost exclusively to sacred painting until 1967, before returning to secular subjects. Saint Veronica, painted in 1951, marks the beginning of this sacred period and illustrates Martin's search for a renewed pictorial language to express faith. Here, he employs tempera on panel and gold leaf, reviving medieval techniques and the aesthetics of the icon. The finely tooled golden halo anchors the figure within the spiritual

Dealer

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tradition of the Christian East. According to Christian tradition, Saint Veronica wiped the face of Christ on His way to Calvary, and His features were miraculously imprinted on her veil. Martin introduces a striking modernity: the saint is depicted frontally, with half-closed eyes, her elongated and stylized face marked by tears that heighten her compassion. The veil she holds is painted in a vivid red -- an unusual yet powerful symbolic choice, evoking both the blood of sacrifice and the spiritual light of the Passion. The face of Christ appears as a spectral imprint, incised in delicate lines that suggest an immaterial presence rather than a realistic image. Through this fusion of tradition and modernity, Jean Martin offers a profoundly contemporary reading of an ancient iconographic theme. The work reflects the renewal of sacred art in 1950s France, when painters and architects sought to restore religious expression to a language suited to the modern world.