



Piat-joseph Sauvage (1744-1818) Portrait Of Buffon Aged 65 Miniature Tournai



6 200 EUR

Signature : Piat-Joseph Sauvage

Period : 18th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Gouache

Diameter : 6,5 cm

Description

Piat-Joseph SAUVAGE(Tournai, 1744 - Tournai, 1818)Portrait of Buffon aged 65Circular gouacheDiameter: 6.5 cmSigned lower centerCirca 1775Provenance: Château du MaraisRelated work: engraving by Augustin de Saint-Aubin published in 1798, reproducing this portrait (No. 32 of the catalogue raisonné of Saint-Aubin's engraved work)Piat-Joseph Sauvage is the main artist of the late 18th century specializing in trompe-l'oeil painting in imitation of marble or bronze, in the antique style. Using all supports, canvas, marble, ivory or porcelain, he essentially produced bas-reliefs with mythological subjects and often decorative purposes (over doors), as well as profile portraits on a blue or dark gray background similar to medals or cameos. Concerning this last genre,

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Henri Bouchot wrote in 1910 in his work *La miniature française 1750-1825*: "He drew elegant profiles, with a cut neck, in the style of medals or coins, of which he was neither the inventor nor the propagator. Cochin, Greuze had long preceded him; only he gave them an elegant finish, much appreciated by amateurs." Initially trained at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, after a stint in Brussels, Sauvage went fairly quickly to Paris where he exhibited from 1764 at the Academy of Saint Luke; He was already famous and sought after by a private clientele when he was received at the Academies of Toulouse and Lille, respectively in 1774 and 1776. He participated in the Salon from 1781 (the year he was accepted into the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, before being received in 1783) to 1810, with a total of around fifty works. He then worked extensively for the royal palaces (Compiègne, Fontainebleau, Louvre, Saint-Cloud, Chantilly, Rambouillet), then in the service of porcelain manufacturers (Dihl and Guérard in Paris, and Sèvres) for around fifteen years, before returning around 1810 to Tournai, where he directed the Academy of Drawing until his death. Sauvage painted here a portrait of Georges-Louis Leclerc (Montbard, 1707-Paris, 1788), just before the latter was named Count of Buffon by Louis XV, the most famous naturalist scientist of the 18th century, but also philosopher and writer, emblematic personality of the Age of Enlightenment. In a letter to Madame Daubenton dated November 30, 1772, Buffon thus evokes the wait for his grisaille portrait by Sauvage mounted in a box. Subsequently, Buffon would repeatedly offer his portrait mounted on precious boxes, as a way of recognizing services rendered to the Jardin du Roi. It is therefore difficult to know if our work is the original (which was at the end of the 19th century in the collection of Henri Nadault, the great-grandnephew of the naturalist) or not among the various copies painted by Sauvage. Thus, we find in an auction of miniatures and display objects (collection of Mr.

Ch...B...) of March 22, 1884, Drouot Room 7, a "Portrait in profile of Mr. de Buffon, by Sauvage, in grisaille on a black background. Gilt bronze frame" under number 76 of the catalog. Yet another, in oval format, sold for 170 francs on May 31, 1910 at Drouot Room 1, collection of MR., number 10 of the catalog: "Oval miniature in grisaille: Silhouette of Buffon, by Sauvage. Signed. Louis XVI period. Bronze frame". There is also a copy presented at the Exhibition of Miniatures, Brussels, March-July 1912, number 1089 of the catalog; the work belonged to the collection of Madame Orban, wife of Alfred Orban de Xivry (1857-1922), lawyer and Catholic politician. Its reproduction p. 151 in *L'art flamand et hollandais* of January 1912 allows us to see that it is not ours.