



Painting By Cesare Dell'acqua (pirano D'istria 1821 - Ixelles 1905), "les Jeux"

14 000 EUR



Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 162

Height : 86

Description

Cesare Dell'Acqua (Pirano d'Istria 1821 - Ixelles 1905), "Les Jeux" Oil on canvas, 86 x 162 cm. Signed "Cesare Dell'Acqua" on the right, contemporary frame. The overdoor, composed of canvas and original frame that give it the appearance of a tympanum, comes from the Chateau des Amerois in Brussels, home of Prince Philip, Count of Flanders and younger brother of King Leopold II of Belgium. Following a fire that razed the previous building, in 1877 Philip commissioned the construction of a new castle, intended as a summer residence for himself and his family. The pictorial decoration of the interiors was entrusted to Dell'Acqua, who had settled and worked in Brussels since 1848; following the sale of the castle after the First World War, the canvases disappeared from their original

Dealer

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location. *Les Jeux* apparently represents a genre scene set in the Renaissance period; a more attentive eye will notice instead that the four figures in the foreground are not just extras, but portraits of real historical figures. The woman in the coral pink dress is Princess Maria of Hohenzollern, spouse of Philip and Countess of Flanders; in one hand she holds a perch on which rests a goldfinch, a symbol of the Passion of Christ and probably a reference to the family's Catholic faith. To her left, a little girl dressed in the finest green brocade is portrayed from behind, while she watches the court enjoying themselves at the game: it is Princess Henriette, the second-born of the family. To the right of the countess is Prince Baldwin; the little boy, with amber skin, is portrayed while conversing and affectionately placing his hand on the shoulder of the youngest, Prince Albert, recognizable by his hair of golden curls. The child is dressed in a white dress that reaches his feet, as was customary for infants of both sexes until the beginning of the 20th century; in one hand he is clutching a curious ring-shaped object, perhaps a sweet or an amber gum massager. As the firstborn, Baudouin was the first in line to succeed to the Crown of Belgium, but he never succeeded in ascending to the throne due to his premature death at only twenty-one years of age. The prestigious position was to be held by his younger brother, who rose to power under the name of King Albert I of Belgium. The recognition of the canvas as the overdoor of the Chateau des Amerois was possible thanks to the artist's original sketch, a medium-sized watercolor now preserved in the Cabinet des Stamps of the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels; the drawing is known by the title written by Cesare Dell'Acqua himself of *Welcome* and presents notable differences with the final version; among all, the absence of Princess Josephine, who was instead present in the project watercolor. A companion piece to *Les Jeux* must have been an overdoor depicting Philip, Count of

Flanders, as demonstrated by the presence of a watercolour sketch in which he is portrayed together with his wife and son Alberto; unfortunately, its current location is unknown.

Both watercolour drawings are published in the catalogues edited by Flavio Tossi and dedicated to the painter Cesare

Dell'Acqua.**BIOGRAPHY**Cesare Dell'Acqua was born in Pirano d'Istria in 1821. Following the death of his father Andrea, a judge, the family moved to Capodistria in 1826, the city of origin of the Dell'Acquas. He began an scholastic career that continued in Trieste but was forced to interrupt his studies due to economic needs: from 1833 he worked a modest job at the shipping company Parisi & C., practicing drawing and following his vocation. One of his sketches was noticed by the sculptor Pietro Zandomeneghi, who together with other Venetian artists and patrons, including the historian Pietro Kandler, managed to obtain a scholarship from the Municipality of Trieste to allow the young Dell'Acqua to study painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. At the age of twenty-one he began his true artistic career, making his debut in 1843 at the Fourth Exhibition of the Trieste Society of Fine Arts. The following year he was commissioned by the municipality of Trieste, together with the landscape artist Alberto Rieger, to make a series of fifteen lithographs in memory of the celebrations for the official visit of the Emperor of Austria Ferdinand I and his wife Maria Anna of Savoy, making himself known in aristocratic circles, mainly Austrian. After completing his studies at the Venetian Academy in 1847, he left for a European trip, stopping in Vienna and Munich before arriving in Paris at the beginning of the following year. He did not stay in the French city for long due to the outbreak of the Third French Revolution, of which Dell'Acqua's notebook of drawings, now in the Louvre, remains a testimony; the artist then moved to Brussels, where his older brother Eugenio had already been living for years.

Dell'Acqua continued to integrate into the Belgian artistic and multicultural environment, joining the Cercle Artistiques et Littéraire and becoming a student of the history painter Louis Gallait, a choice that was not accidental: "history painting", that is, depicting scenes from Western secular history, was considered by the Academies of the time to be the most prestigious form in the hierarchy of genres. During the same period, in line with the Romantic trend, he presented a work dedicated to Niccolò Macchiavelli at the Brussels Exhibition. In 1855 he married a young woman from a good Belgian family, with whom he had two daughters, consolidating his ties with local society and territory without ever forgetting Trieste, continuing to manage its patronage. His talent and executive ability earned him important commissions from Archduke Maximilian of Austria: on the occasion of his marriage to Princess Charlotte of Belgium, celebrated in Brussels in 1857, he was summoned to portray the ceremony from life, and was then hired to decorate the Miramare Castle in Trieste with a historical cycle. There is no shortage of military chivalric commendations, recognized to the artist by King Leopold, who named him Knight of his Order in 1863 and subsequently by Maximilian of Austria, with the title of Officer of the Order of Guadalupe the following year. An extremely prolific artist, at the beginning of the 1870s he distanced himself from the romantic and historical academic currents to create works with a decorative taste inspired by the Venetians of the Renaissance, first of all Titian and Veronese. These pictorial cycles, with a spectacular yet refined taste, earned him wealthy commissions, including those from the Italian Consulate at Palazzo Herrera and from Philip Count of Flanders, brother of the King of Belgium. He made his debut on the international scene with his participation in the Universal Exhibition in Vienna in 1873 and in the London International Exhibition the following year, sending his works to exhibitions throughout Europe but also to the

United States and Australia in the following years. In 1874, the Uffizi Gallery in Florence asked him for a self-portrait to be included in the gallery of famous painters in their museum; subsequently, the Academy of Fine Arts in Milan named him an honorary member of the Committee. After a life of celebrated successes, he died in the municipality of Ixelles in 1905; shortly after, the aforementioned Cercle Artistiques et Littéraire of which he was a member dedicated his first imposing perspective to him. His works are now preserved in the museums of Aversa and Brussels, in the Collections of the Belgian royals as well as in Venice, Padua, Piran d'Istria, Capodistria and above all Trieste, in the Civic Museums, in the Miramare Castle and in Villa Vianello.