



Nakayama Sugakudo (active 1850-1870), Greenfinch And Gardenia, Japanese Print 1859



250 EUR

Signature : Nakayama SUGAKUDO (actif 1850-1870)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Width : 23,4cm

Height : 35,7cm

Depth : oban

Description

Nakayama SUGAKUDO (active 1850-1870) Greenfinch and Gardenia Japanese print from the 1859 collection The Forty-Eight Birds Drawn from Nature 1859 Laid paper Edo Period (Tokyo) Publisher: Tsutaya Kichizo (1859) Publisher's Seal | Censor's Seal: Koeido Han | Aratame: Dating seal in the lower left corner of the print (missing as it was cut from the yellow border, but the seal edges are still visible). Signed Sugaku in the plate. Dimensions: 35.7 x 23.4 cm (Oban). Superb Japanese print displaying all the beauty of Ukiyo-e art, with vibrant, still-fresh colors and an elegant motif of a greenfinch, delicately perched on its gardenia branch. It is in good condition despite a few minor details: the central fold, characteristic of this period, and the trimmed margins, including the left margin,

Dealer

Antic'idées

Généraliste

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which is cut directly over the seals. A section of paper is thinned in the upper right corner near the bird's head (most visible on the back of the print) and appears to have been reinforced with a paper patch to prevent further damage to this area. We know very little about the artist Nakayama Sugakudo, who was active in Tokyo between 1850 and 1870. His real name was Nakayama Akinao, and most essential biographical details, such as his birth and death dates, are unknown, adding to the mystery and legend surrounding him. He was trained by the painter Tazaki Soun, a member of the Nangaou Bunjinga school, a refined style of painting primarily focused on landscape and heavily influenced by ink painting, characterized by a great freedom of line. Tazaki Soun was himself a disciple of the renowned painter of this school, Tani Buncho. Sugakudo, who sometimes used the name Sugaku, produced most of his work in the 1850s and 1860s, a period that coincides with the rise of the great landscape painter Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858), whose heir he is considered to be. Hiroshige had captivated the public with his views of famous places (meisho) and other nature scenes. Nakayama Sugakudo specialized in the refined genre of kacho-e, that is, natural scenes with birds and flowers. His major work is considered to be the series of forty-eight bird prints entitled *Ikiutsushi shijuhachi taka* (1859), published by Tsutaya Kichizo of the Koeido publishing house, where the influence of his master, Tazaki Soun, is evident. Our print is part of this collection, a rare testimony of the period regarding the artistic and ornithological practices of Japan. Its publication also demonstrates the interest of such subjects for buyers, whether collectors, local enthusiasts, or foreigners, who facilitated its dissemination as far as France, as seen in our print. Sugakudo's main strength lies in the composition of his natural scenes, depicting birds in relation to the vegetation that constitutes their habitat, as well as seasonal elements characteristic of each species. In this sense, the series is very varied--featuring

scenes of spring, summer, autumn, and winter--and instantly recognizable thanks to its characteristic yellow border. Stylistically, it is a faithful follower of Hiroshige, with well-constructed compositions, precise drawing, and intense yet harmonious colors. Although these prints are intended for contemplation, they could certainly be used for ornithological study, due to the accuracy with which the plumage and anatomical details of each specimen are depicted. His work has not been particularly appreciated by critics, perhaps because it falls somewhere between the attractive kacho-e compositions of the ukiyo-e landscape painters of the Edo period (1603-1868), such as the aforementioned Hiroshige, and the more specialized naturalist painters of the Meiji era (1868-1912), such as Kono Bairei (1844-1895), who published extensive albums, sparing no effort, for a more demanding public.