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Follower Of Giambattista Tiepolo, 18th Century, Cleopatra's Banquet



2 800 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 40

Height : 48

Description

Follower of Giambattista Tiepolo, 18th century
Cleopatra's Banquet
Oil on canvas, 48 x 40 cm - With frame, 67 x 59 cm
The theme of Cleopatra's Banquet represents one of the pinnacles of Giambattista Tiepolo's production (Venice, 1696 - Madrid, 1770), a subject that the Venetian artist addressed repeatedly, transforming it into a manifesto of late Baroque and Rococo painting. The narrative is inspired by the famous episode described by Pliny the Elder, in which the queen of Egypt, to demonstrate her immense wealth to Mark Antony, dissolves a very rare pearl in a glass of vinegar and then drinks it. Tiepolo uses this historical pretext to stage a theatre of pomp, classical architecture and sumptuous costumes that evoke the Venice of his time more than ancient Egypt. The first

Dealer

Ars Antiqua srl

Antiquaire généraliste

Tel : +39 02 29529057

Via C. Pisacane, 55 - 57

Milano 20129

significant version dates back to the 1740s, with the large oil on canvas now preserved in the National Gallery in Victoria, Melbourne (1743-44). In this work, Tiepolo defines the compositional structure that will become canonical: Cleopatra and Marcantonio sit opposite each other, separated by a laid table, while the monumental architecture in the background, characterized by Corinthian loggias and columns, gives a solemn and almost theatrical tone to the event. The clear light and bright palette emphasize the dramatic gesture of the queen holding the pearl suspended above the chalice. Shortly after, Tiepolo produced a second version, now in the Musée Cognacq-Jay in Paris, smaller in size and more intimate in atmosphere, almost a preparatory sketch or variant for a private collector. However, the culmination of this iconographic research is represented by the spectacular fresco of Palazzo Labia in Venice (1746-47), the model for which is based on the canvas presented here, most likely created by a follower of the master who had had the opportunity to see it live. Here, the banquet scene is inserted into a complex system of architectural quadratures created by Gerolamo Mengozzi Colonna. Cleopatra takes on the appearance of an 18th-century Venetian noblewoman, and the integration between the painting and the real space of the hall transforms the observer into an eyewitness to the convivium. The influence of these compositions was immense among his followers, who spread the model throughout Europe, especially taking up Tiepolo's ability to organize large masses of figures in open spaces, imitating Tiepolo's scenographic "grand goût" which combined Palladian-derived architectural precision with unprecedented chromatic freedom. The painting under examination captures the essence of the monumental Venetian fresco, transposing its theatricality into a more intimate dimension, almost as if it were a small model, but with an equally vibrant character. While in Palazzo Labia Colonna's quadratures integrate the

fresco into the real space of the room, here the artist reproduces those same false architectures within the confines of the canvas, creating a sort of "picture within a picture" that emulates the original perspective effect. The brushstroke here appears rapid, loose and luminous, typical of Tiepolo's maturity, who spread the color with a freedom anticipating the new modern taste.