



Neapolitan Manufacture, 18th Century, Two Heads Of Nativity Figures

1 400 EUR



Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Painted wood

Height : 14,5

Description

Neapolitan manufacture, 18th century Two heads of nativity figures Carved and painted wood with glass paste eyes, h max 14.5 cm In the refined artistic production of eighteenth-century Naples, the two small heads in question represent an excellent testimony to that "miniature sculpture" that elevated the nativity scene from a devotional rite to a phenomenon of the highest international collecting. Crafted from finely carved, polychrome wood, these works stand out from the more common terracotta production due to the precious material and the precision of the burin, suggesting a destination for figures of particular hierarchical importance within the spectacular nativity scene settings of the time. These sculptures blend Baroque naturalism and idealization, animating thanks to expert glazes of

Dealer

Ars Antiqua srl

Antiquaire généraliste

Tel : +39 02 29529057

Via C. Pisacane, 55 - 57

Milano 20129

the complexion and the use of glass paste eyes, inserted from the inside to give a vital and theatrical gaze. If the male face, with its wavy beard and proud expression, ennobles popular traits according to Arcadian taste, the female figure embodies a composed elegance: the diaphanous skin and symmetrical hairstyles recall the cultured models of the nobility or of eighteenth-century angelic figures. These heads were born in the cultural climate promoted by Charles of Bourbon, sovereign who transformed Naples into a cosmopolitan capital. In the 18th century, the nativity scene became the stage of reality: alongside the Nativity, artists --often the same ones who worked on the great Bourbon construction sites, such as the famous Giuseppe Sanmartino -- shaped a varied and teeming humanity. The figures that have survived to the present day are mostly isolated and therefore devoid of the compositional variations and ephemeral scenography in which they were placed, which must have been reminiscent of the pictorial landscape of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Nonetheless, they show us a part of what was supposed to be a representation curated by several craftsmen, assigned to naturalistic or architectural scenography, sculptures, "harnesses" (details such as fruit and vegetables), animals or "clothing" and organized by a specialist to regulate the whole. Originally, these heads were mounted on wire mannequins and tow, a flexible structure that allowed the figures to be given dynamic and realistic movements, before being covered with Saint Leucius's silk, very fine embroidery and tiny silver or coral jewels.