



## Apollo And Phaethon, Oil On Canvas, Early 18th Century



1 550 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Length : 87

Width : 87

### Description

Phaethon Asking Apollo to Drive the Chariot of the Sun. Oil on canvas, early 18th century. Very good condition, relined. This composition illustrates a major episode from ancient mythology, taken from Book II of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: Phaethon's request to his father, the god of the Sun, to drive the celestial chariot. In a luminous atmosphere bathed in gold and clouds, Apollo, haloed by the sun's rays, restrains the spirited horses of his chariot. At his feet, the young Phaethon, in ancient armor, implores his father. The artist chose to depict this moment when the hero's destiny hangs in the balance, between the desire for recognition and the impending tragedy. According to Ovid's account, Phaethon, eager to prove his divine origin, addresses his father thus: "O my father, if I have

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the right to bear this glorious name, if I am truly born of your blood, give me a shining testament to my lineage, and dispel the doubts that offend my honor. Grant me what I ask of you, and let this irrevocable pledge of your affection shield me from reproach." The god, moved, swore by the Styx to grant his wish. Then Phaethon declared: "I wish to drive the luminous chariot of the Sun across the heavens for one day." But Apollo, aware of the peril, immediately tries to dissuade him: "My son, what you ask is beyond your strength; This is no gift befitting your age. None of the immortals, save I, can guide this chariot. Jupiter himself could not control these impetuous horses. The path is steep, the center of the sky burns, and the descent is swift and perilous. If the horses feel your hand tremble, they will stray from the road, and you will be unable to hold them back or bring them back. Renounce this rash desire, and do not seek, through imprudent ambition, to rush to your ruin." The tragic outcome is well known: Phaethon, unable to control the horses of the Sun, sets the sky and the earth ablaze before being struck down by Jupiter.