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Workshop Of Frans Wouters (Lier, 1612 - Antwerp, 1659), Diana Surprised At The Bathroom

4 800 EUR



Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting on copper

Width : 29,5

Height : 19,5

Description

Workshop of Frans Wouters (Lier, 1612 - Antwerp, 1659) Diana surprised at the bathroom Oil on copper, cm 19.5 x 29.5 The oil on copper painting Diana Surprised Bathing by Actaeon, attributable to the workshop of Frans Wouters and dating from the late 17th to the early 18th century, depicts one of the most successful mythological episodes in the European figurative tradition. The scene captures the moment when Actaeon, having accidentally entered the sacred grove, surprises Diana and her entourage of nymphs while bathing. The composition, set in a shady, tree-lined landscape, is animated by a dense interweaving of naked female bodies, captured in dynamic and varied poses: some nymphs attempt to cover themselves, others react with gestures of surprise or defense. From a

Dealer

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stylistic point of view, the work presents elements that directly refer to Wouters' autograph production, especially in the construction of the background landscape, dense with trees and open to atmospheric glimpses, and in the close dialogue between figures and nature. Significant comparisons can be established with paintings such as *Nymphs Surprised by Satyrs* in the National Gallery in London or *Venus and Adonis in a Landscape* in the Torfaen Museum, which feature similar compositional systems and a similar attention to the rendering of bodies and the natural context, conceived not as a simple backdrop, but as a narrative space. The predilection for small to medium formats and mythological subjects intended for private commissioning is also fully consistent with the practice of Wouters and his workshop. A further element of interest is the fact that in the RKD - Netherlands Institute for Art History - another version of the same subject is documented, attributed to a generic "anonymous Dutch painter". The presence of multiple versions confirms the iconographic success of the composition and suggests a circulation of models within the Flemish environment, probably linked precisely to the workshop activity and the repetition of successful themes for the collecting market. Frans Wouters was a central figure of the Flemish Baroque, capable of translating the great inventions of Rubens' painting to a more intimate scale. After an initial apprenticeship with Pieter van Avont, he entered the workshop of Peter Paul Rubens, assimilating a taste for warm color and vibrant landscapes of light. His career led him to work for important international commissions, from Emperor Ferdinand II to the court of the Prince of Wales and future King of England Charles II, where he had the opportunity to engage with the art of Antonio van Dyck. After returning to Antwerp and serving Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria, his style became more elegant and elongated in his figures, with a greater attention to emotional expressiveness. The

subject of Diana and Actaeon is part of a long figurative tradition dating back at least to the 16th century, with famous examples such as Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* now in Edinburgh. The version considered here, despite its later and workshop-like declination, testifies to the persistence and adaptability of this iconographic model, reinterpreted according to Flemish Baroque taste and the needs of a cultured private clientele.