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18th-century Watercolor, He Sleeps - Peltro William Tomkins (1760-1840)



1 500 EUR

Signature : Peltro William Tomkins (1760-1840)

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Width : 16,8 cm

Height : 22 cm

Description

Original watercolor that served as the model for the engraving published in 1789 Description A watercolor depicting a young woman in profile, wearing a broad feathered hat, lifting a light veil over a sleeping infant. The composition is distinguished by its fine execution, subtle gradations and a delicate palette dominated by silvery grays, luminous whites and accents of deep blue. The whole reveals a sensibility characteristic of late 18th century English aesthetics, imbued with restraint, grace and intimacy. Analysis and correspondence The correspondence with the print held at the National Galleries of Scotland is absolute. According to the research carried out and after thorough comparison with the print held in public collection, the watercolor and the engraving show

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a perfect identity of composition, right down to the relationships of proportions, the drawing of lines and the precision of details. This is not an interpretation, but a rigorously faithful transposition of the watercolor onto the copper matrix, executed with remarkable accuracy. The etching thus appears as a direct carryover of the initial invention: only the technique differs, moving from watercolor wash to stipple etching, without any change to the composition. The work therefore unambiguously constitutes the original model for the engraving *He Sleeps*, produced in 1789 by Peltro William Tomkins. Graphic language and technique The treatment of modeling, achieved through extremely smooth transitions, reveals a thought already oriented towards engraving. The supple contours and rendering of skin tones reflect a search for atmospheric effects that the stippling technique makes it possible to reproduce precisely. The British Museum presents Tomkins as a major engraver of his time, specializing in stippled engraving, a technique consisting of modulating shapes and light with a multitude of dots to obtain subtle gradations, close to the rendering of drawing and watercolor. Early sources further describe *He Sleeps* as a work "drawn and engraved by Tomkins himself", confirming that he is both the author of the invention and its engraved translation. Condition and mounting The watercolor is presented in its antique mounting, preserved in its original condition. Original cardboard support and binding preserved. Antique background card present. Antique frame consistent with the whole. Visible passepartout replaced at a more recent time. The whole remains stable and legible, although typical of antique mounts. :Deacidification and light cleaning could be considered. Removal of the mounting board might be recommended in time. However, it's worth pointing out: The paper holds up well, The remarkable freshness of the colors, The absence of any major alteration to the reading of the work.

Context Trained under Bartolozzi, Peltro William Tomkins was one of the leading exponents of color engraving in late XVIIIe century England. This work is an exemplary illustration of the transition from drawing to engraving, at a time when sentimental and domestic images found the stippling technique a favored mode of dissemination. References He Sleeps (1789), color engraving, held at the National Galleries of Scotland British Museum: biographical note on Tomkins, engraver specializing in the stipple technique Specialized sources mention the work as "drawn and engraved by P. W. Tomkins" A plate of the original engraving held in public collection is presented in the set of photographs accompanying this work. Conclusion By its perfect identity with the engraving He Sleeps (1789), this watercolor is a rare testimony to the creative process of Peltro William Tomkins. It stands out both as an autonomous work of great finesse and as the direct matrix of a print held in a major public collection, illustrating with exceptional clarity the transition from drawing to engraving in late 18th century England. Dimensions: H: 22cm x W: 16.8cm