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## Portrait Of A Young Italian Princess. 16th Century



15 800 EUR

Signature : Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614)

Period : 16th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Oil painting on wood

Width : 64

Height : 70

### Description

Portrait of a Young Italian Princess Workshop of Lavinia Fontana Italy, circa 1590-1600 Oil on walnut panel (single plank) Presented in a superb and rare period frame in ebony veneer, deeply moulded with an inverted profile and a central checkerboard motif Dimensions with frame: 70 × 64 cm. Panel alone: 34 × 28 cm This delicate portrait captures the grace of a very young Italian aristocrat, likely from a prominent Bolognese or Florentine family at the turn of the sixteenth to the seventeenth century. The painter lingers on the freshness of her face, the softness of her gaze, and that almost-blossoming adolescent beauty. Everything suggests a young bride-to-be or a princess, portrayed at the threshold of adulthood in a moment of calm solemnity. The richness of her attire confirms her rank. The high starched

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collar, opening like a fan, is typical of Italian fashion around 1590-1600, particularly favoured among patrician circles. The dark brocade woven with gold, the fine lace, and the overall refinement create an ensemble of rare elegance. Jewels play an essential role here: the young woman wears a necklace of fine pearls, symbolising purity, nobility, and marital status. At her ear hangs a single earring set with a drop pearl, delicately suspended, catching the light and emphasising the refinement of her features. Pearls were among the most prized adornments for young noblewomen, often given at the time of betrothal or as part of family alliances. Their presence reinforces the idea of a presentation portrait, perhaps painted for an arranged marriage or a prestigious union. Her hair, gathered and adorned with green ribbons and small flowers, completes the image of noble youth prepared for her entry into adult life. The attribution naturally points toward Lavinia Fontana, the great Bolognese portraitist whose art is distinguished by meticulous attention to fabrics, jewels, and female physiognomies. One recognises here her way of modelling the skin with an almost enamelled softness, her taste for precious detail, and her ability to reveal the sitter's intimate personality behind the finery. The work may originate from her workshop or immediate circle, so closely does its spirit and finesse align with her artistic world. The painting enchants through its balance: the sitter's radiant youth, the delicacy of the painter's hand, and the discreet nobility of the composition make it a portrait of great sensitivity, a precious witness to Italian elegance around 1600.

Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614)

Lavinia Fontana is one of the first women painters in Europe to achieve a truly public and recognised career. Born in Bologna into a family of artists, she trained under her father, Prospero Fontana, and very early developed a remarkable talent for portraiture. She quickly became the preferred portraitist of the Bolognese, and later Roman, aristocracy thanks to her exquisite ability to

depict luxurious fabrics, jewels, lace, and feminine adornments. Her style combines great psychological subtlety with a sharp eye for detail, making her one of the major figures of late Mannerism. After settling in Rome in 1603, she received prestigious commissions, including from the Vatican, and established herself as a respected artist in a milieu almost entirely dominated by men. She died in 1614, recognised as one of the finest portrait painters of her time. In perfect condition! Sold with a certificate of authenticity.