



## Portrait Of The Ballerina Santina Olivieri, Known As



20 000 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

### Description

"Expert report researched, prepared, and signed by Dr. Arabella Cifani" Below: The painting depicts one of the most famous and celebrated divas of 18th-century Europe: Santina Olivieri, known as "la Reggiana," elegantly dressed and wearing a low-cut neckline. A love-struck swan, garlanded with flowers, approaches her with insinuating gestures. The painting alludes to the myth of Leda and the Swan, which tells how Zeus, transforming himself into a swan, seduced Leda, wife of Tyndareus, king of Sparta, on the banks of the river Eurotas. From this union, after Leda laid eggs, were born the divine twins Pollux and Helen (whose beauty sparked the Trojan War), and the mortal twins Castor and Clytemnestra, sons of Tyndareus, born from a subsequent night in which Leda lay with her

### Dealer

**Antichità Goglia**

furnitures, sculptures, paintings, pendulum clock

Tel : 0039 3476092521

Mobile : 0039 3476092521

Napoli 1

Carinaro 81032

husband. The myth, which explores the themes of divine love, seduction, transformation, and the birth of central figures in Greek mythology, became a classic subject in Renaissance art and beyond and captivated many artists, including Leonardo. In this case, the role of the beautiful Leda is played by a very famous Italian ballerina who was highly active in Germany, where she became a true, acclaimed diva: Santina Olivieri, known as "la Reggiana." We know relatively little about this ballerina. Born in Reggio Emilia (hence her nickname), she married Pierantonio Gratarol (1738-1785)--who was the Venetian Republic's ambassador to the court of Naples--at just twenty-two years old, though she already possessed a substantial dowry. He soon divorced her after squandering her entire dowry. Gratarol was an adventurer with a disorderly life: a fact that later led to his being banished and sentenced to death in Venice. In 1744, she is documented as prima ballerina for the season at the Obizzi Theater in Padua, but she was active in many Italian theaters. Between 1747 and 1748, she was in Naples at the San Carlo Theater, where she performed in at least four ballets under the direction of Gaetano Grossatesta, choreographer and impresario at the Royal San Carlo Theater. Benedetto Croce recounts that "In November 1751, the ballerina Santa Olivieri, known as 'la Reggiana,' was ordered to leave Naples since she was not employed. Fainting, etc. But here is a petition from 'Gav. Count Giorgio Azzo Migliorucci di Petrella Nientzlawski, a nobleman of the Kingdom of Poland, and a free Baron of the Palatinate of Krakow.' He wished to settle in Naples with his son Antonio, who had married La Reggiana in Rome. This gentleman with so many names was not granted permission" (Teatri f. 9.º). Nothing else is known about this episode in Olivieri's life; what is certain is that at the beginning of 1752 the woman was in Vienna and later in Berlin, where her success was such that Antonio Pesne was commissioned to paint a portrait of her that adorned Frederick II's

bedroom in Potsdam. The Italian dancer was engaged by the Berlin court theater from April 8, 1752, to May 12, 1753, and danced for the first time before the king in Potsdam on August 20, 1752. Greatly admired, she was the subject of a series of portraits en rôle. Antoine Pesne portrayed the Reggiana as Leda and as Cleopatra. The ballerina later returned to Italy and died in Treviso on November 13, 1786. Period: 18th century; Provenance: France; Dimensions: Including frame: Height 130 cm; Width 110 cm; Without frame: Height 96 cm; Width 77 cm; Condition: Excellent condition; Documentation: Certificate of authenticity and expert appraisal by Dr. "Arabella Cifani"; Assistance: We are at your disposal for further clarification, information, and images; Shipping: Available throughout Italy, Europe, and the rest of the world. Reasonable prices, maximum security, and full traceability. (To be arranged privately). We wish you a good day Antichità Goglia