



Egbert Van Heemskerck (haarlem, 1634 - London, 1704), From The Workshop Of, Tavern Scenes



3 800 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 25,5

Height : 20,5

Description

Egbert van Heemskerck (Haarlem, 1634 - London, 1704), workshop of Tavern scenes Oil on canvas, 20.5 x 25.5 cm (2) - with frame, 26 x 31 cm This pair of paintings from the workshop of Egbert van Heemskerck represents an emblematic example of 17th-century Dutch genre painting, an era in which the depiction of daily life reached heights of extraordinary introspection and social satire. In the two scenes depicted, the artist takes us inside smoky, dimly lit taverns, where the narrative unfolds through card games, pipe smoke, and the conviviality sparked by wine. In the first painting, a group of patrons is captured in a moment of collective hilarity around a table; a figure in the foreground stands out, carefully examining a card or document, while a companion next to him opens his mouth wide in a

Dealer

Ars Antiqua srl

Antiquaire généraliste

Tel : +39 02 29529057

Via C. Pisacane, 55 - 57

Milano 20129

thunderous laugh and a violinist, in the shadows, accompanies the scene with his music. The second canvas, however, focuses on a card game--a moment of tension and amusement--where the protagonists' faces are etched with grotesque expressions, ruddy noses, and crooked smiles that reveal the direct influence of Adriaen van Ostade's style. The painting technique employed shows a clear Caravaggesque influence, mediated by the schools of Utrecht and Haarlem: the light, oblique and selective, emerges from an almost impenetrable darkness to strike the focal points of the composition, such as the white sleeves of the garments, the reflections on the tankards, or the folds of the hats, leaving the background in a suggestive shadow that serves to enhance the theatrical expressions of the characters. Egbert van Heemskerck, born in Haarlem in 1634, trained under Pieter de Grebber and became a member of the Guild of Saint Luke in 1646. His life was shaped by the artistic milieu of his hometown, where he grew up as the half-brother of the famous landscape painter Jan Wijnants, before moving to London in the 1670s. In England, his satirical and at times biting style did not go unnoticed, apparently even leading to friction with the court of Charles II. His work is often characterized by this taste for the comic and the excessive, a trait that distinguishes him from the more refined genre painters and aligns him with the masters of the "low genre." To fully appreciate the value of these two paintings, it is helpful to compare them with authentic works held in prestigious international museums. For example, the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent features interior scenes that share with these paintings the same compressed spatial structure and attention to modest detail. At the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, one can admire paintings in which Van Heemskerck further explores human physiognomy, pushing it almost to the point of caricature, exactly as we see in the distorted

expressions of the drinkers analyzed here. These works are part of the vast tradition of genre scenes that flourished in the United Provinces, reflecting a bourgeois society eager to possess images that, under the guise of entertainment, often concealed moralizing intentions. The tavern was not merely a place of leisure, but a stage where the deadly sins--such as sloth, wrath, or lust--were enacted, serving as a warning to the observer. However, in Van Heemskerck, a more purely descriptive and humorous style often prevails, an almost visceral pleasure in portraying humanity in its most earthly and unvarnished aspects. The skillful use of light and the economy of expressive means make this pair of paintings a valuable document of seventeenth-century visual culture, capable of transforming a mundane moment of rural life into a small theater of human passions.