



Felice De Maurizio (1810-1890), Destruction Of The Equestrian Statue Of Francesco Sforza

6 000 EUR



Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 59,5

Height : 44,5

Description

Felice De Maurizio (1810-1890) Destruction of the Equestrian Statue of Francesco Sforza oil on canvas, 44.5 x 59.5 cm; with frame, 70 x 85 cmsigned lower left Provenance: Bernasconi Collection, Milan This painting conveys with dramatic visual force the turbulent transfer of power that took place in Milan in 1499, when the fall of Ludovico il Moro marked the end of an era and the beginning of French rule. The artist blends historical reality and imagination to narrate the collapse of the Sforza dynasty, choosing as a symbolic focal point the assault on what appears to be the legendary equestrian monument to Francesco Sforza, the titanic work designed by Leonardo da Vinci and never completed. The Sforza Monument, commissioned from Leonardo in 1482 by Ludovico il Moro, was

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to be the largest equestrian statue in the world in honor of Francesco Sforza. After years of anatomical studies, the artist created in 1493 a colossal clay model over seven meters tall, intended for a bronze casting that never took place. When Louis XII's troops entered Milan in 1499, the monumental clay model was used by the Gascon crossbowmen as a target for their drills, resulting in its irreparable destruction and leaving Leonardo with the bitter regret of never having seen completed what was to be his greatest sculpture. The description of the work highlights an enraged crowd that, amid debris and smoke, attacks the effigy of the duke with ropes and long poles, transforming the castle courtyard into a theater of iconoclastic fury where the toppling of the statue marks the eradication of the previous regime. In this scenario of radical change, the figure clad in a sumptuous red robe emerges as the political linchpin of the scene, likely identifiable as Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, the Milanese nobleman and bitter enemy of the Sforza family who led the French army to conquer his own city, here portrayed as he observes with solemn detachment the definitive end of his adversaries. The author of the painting is Felice De Maurizio, a painter born in Milan in 1810 who trained at the Brera Academy under the guidance of Luigi Sabatelli between 1824 and 1830, distinguishing himself as a figure painter specializing in historical-literary compositions and commissioned portraits. Throughout his career, he exhibited significant works at Brera, such as Saints Cosmas and Damian, Paul and Virginia, and the Young Christopher Columbus in Meditation, and also created important institutional portraits for the Ospedale Maggiore and the Administration of the Pious Charitable Institutions, such as that of Giuseppe Calcaterra. In addition to painting, De Maurizio devoted himself to set design, restoration, and ornamental decoration, holding the prestigious position of curator of the Pinacoteca di Brera from 1867 to 1882 before his death in Milan in 1890.