



Flemish Master From The First Half Of The 18th Century, *the Sermon Of John The Baptist*

2 600 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting on copper

Width : 33

Height : 26



Description

Flemish master from the first half of the 18th century
The Sermon of John the Baptist
Oil on copper, 26.2 x 33.7 cm
The composition, an oil on copper of fine 18th-century Flemish workmanship, is an emblematic example of how the "cabinet" painting of the era managed to combine religious fervor with an almost theatrical sensibility for landscape. The choice of a metal support is no accident: copper, with its smooth, non-absorbent surface, allows the artist to apply minute brushstrokes and transparent glazes, giving the painting that intrinsic luminosity and definition of detail which, even today, despite the passing of the centuries, preserve its chromatic vibrancy. At the center of the iconographic narrative is the Sermon of St. John the Baptist, a subject that in the Northern tradition often serves

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as a splendid pretext for exploring the genre of the humanized landscape. The scene is dominated by an imposing rocky backdrop, a rugged natural formation that opens like a triumphal arch toward a distant, hazy horizon. This compositional device not only lends spatial depth but creates a symbolic contrast between the darkness of the cave--a place of asceticism and penance--and the clear light of the sky reflected on the waters in the distance, evoking the hope of salvation introduced by the message of the Precursor. St. John is positioned on the left, slightly elevated, wrapped in his characteristic camel-skin garment and holding the processional cross. A diverse crowd gathers around him, rendered with almost miniaturistic precision: one notices figures on horseback who seem to have stopped almost out of curiosity, and commoners absorbed in devout listening. The Flemish painter's skill is evident in his ability to differentiate the postures and facial expressions of this diverse audience, transforming a biblical episode into a lively slice of life. Stylistically, the work reflects the transition from the late Baroque to the early manifestations of a more restrained classicism. Although the structure of the rocks retains a certain 17th-century drama, the palette is refreshed with the bluish and silvery tones typical of the 18th century, evident above all in the rendering of the atmosphere and distant mists. It is a work that invites a close look, typical of private collecting at the time, where sacred narrative transforms into an aesthetic pleasure composed of reflections, chiaroscuro contrasts, and a profound sense of harmony between man and wild nature.