



Pair De Velours Grégoire Late 18th Century



1 400 EUR

Signature : Grégoire

Period : 19th century

Condition : Etat d'usage

Material : Silk

Length : 46

Width : 37

Description

Rare pair of velvets known as "Velours Grégoire", emblematic productions of the manufacture of Gaspard Grégoire, a French inventor active between the end of the 18th century and the First Empire, famous for having perfected one of the most mysterious and refined textile processes of his time. These two compositions depict winged female figures in a neoclassical taste directly inspired by Antiquity and the models disseminated under the Directoire and Empire. One of the figures raises a flaming torch, while the other appears in a dancing, ethereal movement, reminiscent of ancient allegories or the geniuses of the arts. The major interest of these works lies above all in their extraordinary technique of execution. Gaspard Grégoire, born in Aix-en-Provence in the

Dealer

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mid-18th century, developed a revolutionary process that astounded his contemporaries. Unlike a traditional tapestry or an ordinary shaped velvet, the image was not simply obtained by the design of the loom. Grégoire intervened directly on the threads even before weaving, according to a complex system of dyeing and preparation that remains largely secret to this day, as Grégoire destroyed his archives a few days before his death. The silk threads were prepared and dyed with extreme precision so that, once the velvet was woven and cut, the image gradually appeared in the fabric itself. The result immediately fascinated lovers of the decorative arts: seen up close, these velvets present a vibrant, almost impalpable material; at a distance, the figures appear as veritable paintings floating in a deep black background. Pearly complexions, rosy drapery and delicate transitions between light and shadow give these works an almost painterly presence. Some 19th-century writers even compared Grégoire velvets to miniatures painted in silk. The process remains imperfectly understood to this day. Many specialists have likened it to "chiné à la branche", the technique of dyeing yarns before weaving, but Grégoire took this invention to a new level of virtuosity. His secret seems to have disappeared with him, which explains the rarity and almost experimental nature of these productions. Under the Empire, Grégoire velvets were a great success in aristocratic and official circles. Works were commissioned for prestigious residences, and some Grégoire-related textiles were preserved in French national collections. Their refined aesthetic perfectly matched the taste of the time for Antiquity, precious arts and illusionist research. These examples illustrate particularly well this meeting of technical innovation and neoclassical taste. The silhouettes seem to emerge from the black like luminous apparitions, with that characteristic softness of antique velvet where the light diffracts in the silk pile. They are preserved in their elegant antique frames in wood and gilded stucco

decorated with palmettes and pearled friezes from the Empire or Restoration period, in perfect harmony with the subject and the period. General average condition with wear and alterations. Some variations and fragility of the velvet visible, as often on these delicate works particularly sensitive to light and handling. A rare pair of Grégoire velvets, witnesses to a textile invention now almost extinct, on the border between painting, silk and curiosity object. Caire 37x46 cm