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Pieter Van Avont (mechelen, 1600 - Deurne, 1652), Landscape With Saint John The Baptist And The Lamb

4 600 EUR



Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 45

Height : 31,5

Description

Pieter van Avont (Mechelen, 1600 - Deurne, 1652) Landscape with Saint John the Baptist and the Lamb Oil on canvas, 31.5 x 45 cm With frame, 48 x 61 cm Signed lower right P. Van Avont In a luminous wooded landscape with green and golden tones, a naked, chubby child stands at the center of the composition, his right hand outstretched in a gesture of blessing toward a lamb lying at his feet. The child holds a long, pointed staff in his left hand, an iconographic attribute that immediately identifies him as the young Saint John the Baptist, the precursor of Christ, portrayed according to an iconographic tradition established during the Italian Renaissance and later widely disseminated in 17th-century Flanders. The lamb, the quintessential symbol of Christological sacrifice,

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rests on the ground with placid docility, its light-colored fleece rendered with soft brushstrokes and a warm light that shapes its body. The wooded background, rich in foliage stirred by diffused light, opens to the left onto a distant panorama where sloping hills and a sky streaked with luminous clouds can be glimpsed, in a landscape composition typical of the Flemish style. The work is signed by Pieter van Avont, a Flemish painter born in Mechelen to Hans van Avont, a sculptor, and Anna le Febure. He likely received his early training under his father's guidance, and in 1620 he was admitted as a master to the Mechelen guild, later moving to Antwerp, where around 1622-1623 he obtained the title of master in the prestigious Guild of Saint Luke, becoming a citizen of that city in 1631. His career unfolded within the fertile artistic milieu of 17th-century Antwerp, where collaboration among specialized painters was a common and fundamental practice. Van Avont collaborated with many of the city's most important painters, including Jan Brueghel the Elder and the Younger, David Vinckboons, Lucas van Uden, and Jacques d'Arthois, for whom he painted the human figures set within the landscapes created by his colleagues. Van Avont is primarily known for his religious and mythological scenes and for his so-called cabinet paintings, small- and medium-sized compositions intended for private devotion and collection. A recurring motif in his work is the presence of groups of nude children and cherubs, who, in the numerous versions of the Holy Family, appear as the Infant Jesus, Saint John the Baptist, or angels. The style with which he renders these figures is characterized by a soft volumetric rendering achieved through the use of sfumato and warm colors. The painting under consideration fits fully into this catalog and finds precise parallels in numerous works by the painter. In the Bacchanal of Children and the Allegory of Autumn, both in private collections, the wooded landscape serving as the backdrop is entirely comparable to the one described here: the

same dense, leafy tree lines, the same interplay of shadows and glimmers of light among the branches, the same perspective opening toward a distant horizon. Above all, these works feature children and cherubs whose physiques fully correspond to those of the young St. John in the painting under consideration: round thighs, prominent tummies, and soft, warm complexions. Similar observations apply to the *Landscape with Dancing Putti* from the Royal Collection in London, where the same childlike figures come to life in a similar landscape setting, confirming how much these figurative types were a true stylistic hallmark of the painter, reworked with slight variations throughout his entire career. Another specific comparison is offered by the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt with Saint John the Baptist and Angels* from a private collection, in which the same figure of the Precursor returns to the foreground, here portrayed in profile rather than head-on as in our painting, but with an identical bodily composition. In the *Allegory of Autumn* and the *Allegory of Spring*, housed at the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe, the same children appear again, while in the *Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Elizabeth* at the Museum of Fine Arts in Besançon, the figure of the Baptist appears in a more elaborate devotional context, again within a landscape of similar scope. Finally, the lamb resting at the saint's feet in the painting under consideration here finds a direct counterpart in the one depicted in the **Rest on the Flight into Egypt with Saint John the Baptist and Angels** at the Walters Museum in Baltimore, where the rendering of the animal's coat and its posture are nearly identical, confirming a well-established practice of reworking and varying figurative solutions that had already been successfully experimented with.