PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Lucien Cahen-michel (1888-1979) Still Life With Honesty Plant And Elephant, 1940

2 000 EUR

Signature : Lucien Cahen-Michel

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Description

Lucien Cahen-Michel (1888-1979) Still Life with Honesty Plant and Elephant, 1940 Oil on canvas signed and dated 1940 by Lucien Cahen-Michel, a French painter who studied under Gabriel Ferrier and Jules Adler.This refined composition combines the tradition of the still life with a more enigmatic and poetic dimension. In the foreground stands an elegant crystal vase of evident quality, evocative of the productions of prestigious French glasshouses such as Baccarat or Saint-Louis. It contains a generous bouquet of honesty plant (Lunaria annua), rendered with remarkable accuracy. The translucent seed pods display delicate pearly-grey, silvery and mauve reflections, demonstrating the artist's keen observation of light and texture.Behind the vase, resting upon the table, appears an elephant whose

Dealer

Galerie dMdB
Carefully selected art of quality and originality
Mobile : +32476882717

De Merodelei 275
Turnhout 2300

presence introduces a subtle sense of mystery. Logic suggests that it should be a sculpted ornament incorporated into the arrangement, yet the artist's treatment deliberately blurs the distinction. The animal possesses an unexpected vitality and realism, giving the impression that it might at any moment step beyond the confines of the composition.The scene is completed by a richly coloured tablecloth in deep reds and greens, whose vibrant tones provide a striking counterpoint to the cooler hues of the bouquet. The contrast between these elements creates a harmonious yet intriguing composition, balancing decorative richness with an atmosphere of quiet contemplation.The painting is presented in its period frame.Canvas dimensions: 65 × 54 cmFramed dimensions: 77 × 66 cmGallery's View This painting captivates through the subtle ambiguity it creates. At first glance, it appears firmly rooted in the tradition of the still life: a fine crystal vase, a bouquet of honesty plant, and a table draped with a richly coloured cloth. Yet the longer one looks, the more an unexpected sense of mystery begins to emerge.The elephant in the background is the key to this effect. At first, it seems natural to interpret it as a decorative sculpture incorporated into the arrangement. However, the artist's treatment quickly unsettles that reading. The volumes feel alive, the posture is convincing, and the animal appears almost ready to move. The viewer finds themselves caught between two interpretations without ever being able to decide: object or living creature, sculpture or real presence.This uncertainty creates a subtle tension that gives the work its distinctive character. The honesty plant, with its translucent seed pods shimmering in pearly silver reflections, further enhances this dreamlike atmosphere. Between the luminous transparency of the bouquet, the depth of the dark background, and the rich reds and greens of the tablecloth, Lucien Cahen-Michel constructs a suspended world in which the boundaries between reality and imagination are deliberately blurred.It is precisely

this sense of mystery that makes the painting so compelling, allowing it to transcend the traditional still life and approach something more poetic, and even faintly surreal.Lucien Cahen-Michel exhibited regularly at the Salon des Artistes Français, where he was awarded a silver medal in 1929. He also showed his work at the Salon des Artistes Indépendants. Throughout his career, he painted landscapes, still lifes and engraved works distinguished by their sensitivity to light, colour and atmosphere.