Vincenzo Gemito (naples, 1852-1929), Portrait Of Ernest Meissonier



2 800 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Bronze

Width : 24

Height : 56

Depth : 13

Description

Vincenzo Gemito (Naples, 1852 - 1929)Portrait of Ernest MeissonierBronze, 56 x 24 x 13 cmSigned and stamped by the foundry on the side of the base: GEMITOCreated after their meeting in Paris in 1878, the Portrait of Ernest Meissonier is a significant testament to the international relationships forged by Vincenzo Gemito during the years of his full artistic maturity. The first version of the sculpture, presented at the 1880 Promotrice in Turin, depicts the famous French painter standing, holding a brush and a palette, thus captured in the very moment of creative work. The bronze captures the subject's personality with extraordinary effectiveness: his confident posture, focused gaze, long beard, and meticulously rendered clothing all combine to define the image of an established artist fully

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aware of his own prestige. Ernest Meissonier, one of the most celebrated painters of nineteenth-century France, was internationally renowned for his historical and genre scenes, often set in the eighteenth century and characterized by meticulous attention to detail. The work stems from the friendship that developed between Meissonier and Gemito during the 1878 Paris World's Fair. In those years, the young Neapolitan sculptor was achieving growing success outside Italy, and his interaction with the French master helped broaden his cultural horizons. In fact, the portrait reveals a clear stylistic shift from his earlier work: the form is no longer modeled with the immediacy characteristic of his Neapolitan folk figures, but becomes more controlled, refined, and analytical. Every detail of the clothing, the hair, and the tools of the trade is carefully defined, in keeping with the taste of the artist depicted.A comparison with the famous *Fisherman*, housed at the Museo del Maschio Angioino in Naples, clearly highlights this evolution. In the young boy captured in a spontaneous gesture, the energy of movement and the freshness of observation from life prevail; in the *Portrait of Meissonier*, however, the composition appears more deliberate and solemn, intended to celebrate a renowned figure. Similarly, compared to the *Pescatorello* at the Capodimonte Museum, where childlike vitality is rendered through rapid and vibrant modeling, the bronze dedicated to the French painter reveals a more elegant and descriptive approach, almost a tribute to the tradition of the official portrait. A further point of comparison is offered by the *Bust of Giuseppe Verdi* housed at the Teatro alla Scala Museum. In both works, Gemito demonstrates an extraordinary ability to capture the psychological character of the subject, avoiding any cold idealization.Born in Naples in 1852 and abandoned at birth, Vincenzo Gemito was entrusted to Giuseppina Baratta and trained in the workshops of Emanuele Caggiano and

Stanislao Lista, while simultaneously studying portraiture at the National Museum. After his early years at the Academy of Fine Arts, success came quickly thanks to the innovative power of his sculptures inspired by Neapolitan folk life. His stays in Paris and participation in the Salons and major international exhibitions broadened his cultural horizons, while the founding of the Gemito Foundry in 1883 allowed him to directly oversee the quality of the castings. The Portrait of Meissonier marks a pivotal moment in this journey.