Pieter Neefs The Younger (1620-1675) -- Interior Of Antwerp Cathedral



11 400 EUR

Signature : Pieter Neefs le Jeune (1620-1675)

Period : 17th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Oil painting on wood

Width : 47

Height : 55

Description

Signed on the last stepFlemish School, circa 1650-1660Oil on oak panelPresented in a beautiful antique frame with blackened wood and guilloché moldingOverall dimensions: 55 x 47. Panel only: 34 × 27 cmThis panel depicts the interior of St. Mary's Cathedral in Antwerp, where a Mass is being celebrated in a side chapel. The composition, rendered with rigorous architectural perspective, highlights the Gothic vaults and slender columns that structure the sacred space. The light, filtered through the tall windows, reveals the polychrome floor tiles and the elegantly balanced figures: worshippers in prayer, gentlemen advancing toward the altar, and a small dog--a charming detail typical of Flemish painting.The contrast between the deep shadows in the foreground and the bright areas in the

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background draws the viewer's eye toward a symbolic space bathed in an almost supernatural light.Here, Antwerp Cathedral has lost its character as a place of contemplation and silence and appears to be an integral part of the daily lives of parishioners from all walks of life.A signature is visible on a step of the staircase, confirming the attribution to Pieter Neefs the Younger (previously attributed to Pieter Neefs the Elder)As is often the case in the works of this family of painters, the figures were executed by another artist, likely Francken, a regular collaborator of the Neefs. This division of labor--architecture by Neefs, figures by a genre painter--was a common practice in Antwerp workshops during the 17th century.A recent cleaning has made it possible to better appreciate the paint texture and the subtlety of the glazes. The restored clarity of the tones and the precision of the vanishing lines have confirmed the attribution to Pieter Neefs the Younger, whose style is distinguished by a lighter palette and softer light than that of his father.The Popularity of Church Interiors in FlandersIn the first half of the 17th century, the depiction of church interiors became a highly prized genre in Flanders, particularly in Antwerp. These architectural views, both spiritual and scholarly, appealed to collectors' taste for rigorous perspective and the depiction of the sacred.Painters such as Pieter Neefs the Elder, Pieter Neefs the Younger, Hendrick van Steenwijck, and Paul Vedreman de Vries vied with one another in virtuosity to render the depth of the naves, the filtered light, and the calm of the congregation. These compositions, often small in size, were intended for a cultured audience attuned to the geometric beauty and quiet spirituality of these places.Pieter Neefs the Younger (Antwerp, 1620-after 1675) was trained in the studio of his father, Pieter Neefs the Elder, a master of Flemish church scenes. He continued this tradition by refining the perspective and softening the light, giving his works a more serene atmosphere.His paintings, often small in

size, depict the interiors of Gothic churches animated by elegant figures, painted by collaborators such as Frans Francken III or David Teniers the Younger. His style is distinguished by geometric precision and a quiet poetry, characteristics of mid-17th-century Antwerp painting.Provenance (see labels on the back)1) Acquired in 1973 from the London art dealer Leonard Koetser Ltd2) William Rockhill Nelson Collection, Gallery of Art, Atkins Museum of Fine Arts (Kansas City, Missouri, USA) (On loan from Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bloch)3) A 19th-century print featuring the same composition in reverse can be found on the R.K.D. website: https://rkd.nl/imageslite/71415. This engraving was produced for the publication by C. Spuyt, Engravings after the Principal Paintings in the Collection of H.S.H. Prince Auguste d'Arenberg, Brussels 1829.In excellent condition. Sold with a certificate of authenticity