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Giovanni Ghisolfi (milan, 1623 - 1683), Landscape With Architectural Ruins And Figures



3 800 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 31

Height : 41

Description

Giovanni Ghisolfi (Milan, 1623 - 1683) Landscape with Architectural Ruins and Figures Oil on canvas, 41 x 31 cm With frame, 50 x 39 cm A landscape of classical ruins brings Giovanni Ghisolfi's canvas to life with that tension between the grandeur of the past and the fragility of the present that characterizes the entire body of work by this Milanese painter. The composition is organized around a cluster of imposing Ionic columns, still partially joined by a broken entablature that stands out against a luminous sky. The columns, rendered in brown and earthy tones, dominate the upper half of the canvas with a dramatic presence, evoking the space of an ancient temple of which only the skeleton remains. At the base of these structures, steps and collapsed stone blocks form a sort of

Dealer

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irregular stage upon which human figures move, appearing tiny in comparison to the monumentality of the surrounding architecture. In the middle section, three figures appear to be engaged in conversation, sitting or leaning against the ruins of the structure. At the bottom, two figures move among the stones, while stylized vegetation emerges here and there among the boulders. The light, diffused yet directional, shapes the surfaces with precise brushstrokes and sharp contrasts between shaded areas and illuminated planes, lending the architecture a sense of volumetric solidity.

Giovanni Ghisolfi was born in Milan in 1623 and grew up in a family already oriented toward the arts. While still young, he entered the workshop of his uncle Antonio Volpino, where he learned the fundamentals of painting. In 1650, at the age of twenty-seven, he set out for Rome in the company of his friend, the painter Antonio Busca, with the intention of studying ancient architecture and sketching architectural fragments. In the papal city, Ghisolfi worked closely with Salvator Rosa: initially, according to sources, Rosa was responsible for the figures while Ghisolfi handled the architectural perspectives, although modern critics tend to downplay this relationship of dependence, recognizing the Milanese artist's full autonomy from the very beginning. It was precisely in Rome that Ghisolfi received his decisive training in iconography centered on ancient Roman ruins, thanks to which he became the most accomplished specialist in the field, so much so that he is considered the forerunner of the architectural capriccio genre, which would not achieve extraordinary illustrative success until the 18th century, establishing it as an independent pictorial genre. In 1661, upon his return to Lombardy, he decorated a chapel at the Certosa di Pavia; in 1664, he was commissioned to Vicenza to paint frescoes in the Trissino Baston and Giustiniani Baggio palaces. He also worked at the Palazzo Arese Borromeo in Cesano Maderno and at the Villa Reati in Lissone, as well as at the

Sacro Monte di Varese on commission from Cardinal Luigi Alessandro Omodei. The painting examined here fits squarely within the tradition of Ghisolfi's architectural capriccio and finds clear parallels in a series of works that confirm its stylistic coherence and inventiveness. The choice of towering Ionic columns that dominate the scene and the warm, earthy color palette--centered on browns, ochres, and grays illuminated by the blue sky, bring this painting significantly closer to the **Architectural Capriccio with Preparations for a Sacrifice** held by the National Trust in London, which features the same vertical composition of the architecture and the same use of light that sculpts the stone surfaces. Equally pertinent is the comparison with the painting **Fantastic Arch with Venus's Bath**, now in a private collection, where the palette of warm browns and blues is repeated with similar effectiveness in the atmospheric rendering of the background. Typical of Ghisolfi's style is the way he constructs perspectival sequences, treating the background with a light, airy color scheme while the architectural elements are outlined with precise brushstrokes, strong contrasts, and touches of black in the three-dimensional details: a method perfectly evident in the canvas under consideration as well. The architectural rendering finds further points of contact with the **Architectural Capriccio with Figures** from the Piranesium Collection in San. Even more apt is the comparison with the painting **Pythagoras Resurfacing from Hades** from the Almagià Collection in Rome and with the **Architectural Capriccio with a Sculpture of Marcus Aurelius** from the public collections in Innsbruck, in which the same arrangement of fragmented architectural masses, animated by small figures, is evident. These paintings convey a sense of classicism rendered through linear compositions in dark colors and a solid architectural framework, making Ghisolfi a forerunner of 18th-century landscape painting and foreshadowing what Giovanni Paolo Pannini would later bring to full

maturity in the following century.