



Saint Francis Of Assisi, Oil On Copper, Spanish School, 17th Century



900 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting on copper

Width : 15

Height : 11,5

Description

Dimensions with frame: 16 cm high x 20 cm wide
Dimensions without frame: 11.5 cm high x 15 cm wide
This work is an interesting example of Spanish devotional painting on copper, a technique particularly popular in the 16th and 17th centuries due to the precision of the drawing, the rich colors, and the excellent state of preservation guaranteed by this metal surface.
The scene depicts Saint Francis of Assisi during one of his penitential retreats, withdrawn from the world in a humble hut or hermit's cell devoted to prayer, meditation, and fasting, an episode rooted in Franciscan hagiographic sources and which gained some popularity in Baroque spirituality. The composition shows the saint lying on a simple wooden bed in an austere room, sparsely furnished and designed as a material

Dealer

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reflection of the voluntary poverty that characterized his life. His figure appears overcome by intense spiritual emotion as he turns his gaze toward a supernatural manifestation descending from the sky amid luminous clouds. Although at first glance one might see an angelic apparition, the scene seems to correspond more precisely to the account of the mysterious sphere or celestial globe of fire which, according to Franciscan tradition, visited the saint on several occasions during one of his periods of retreat and penance. Sources recount how a luminous ball of fire descended from the sky to Francis's humble hut on three occasions, flooding the place with a supernatural light and providing the saint with profound spiritual comfort. This event was interpreted by his contemporaries as a sign of the special divine grace that accompanied the founder of the Order. The presence of the brother appearing at the door thus takes on fundamental narrative importance. Far from being a secondary character, he represents the brother charged with assisting Francis during his retreat, bringing him the only food he would accept during those days of penance: bread and water. The tray he holds, on which the food is clearly visible, serves to emphasize the extreme austerity of the saint's life and reinforces the contrast between the material poverty of the setting and the spiritual richness of the mystical experience taking place. The inclusion of the two white birds in the foreground is particularly noteworthy. Although discreet, they may be a reference to one of the best-known episodes in the life of Saint Francis: his sermon to the birds. From a stylistic perspective, the work is fully in line with the canons of Spanish religious painting from the second half of the 17th century. The composition revolves around a narrative that is clear and easily understandable to the faithful, structuring the space into three distinct domains: the supernatural world, daily life, and the intimate sphere. The color palette is dominated by ochres, earthy tones, browns, and muted greens--shades that help create an atmosphere of contemplation

and silence. Overall, this is a work of remarkable historical and devotional interest that transcends the most common depictions of the saint to illustrate a less familiar mystical episode.