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LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Trompe-l'oeil Engraving Featuring Assignats



450 EUR

Signature : Pierre-Alexandre Tardieu (1756-1844)

Period : 19th century

Condition : En l'etat

Material : Paper

Width : 54,5

Height : 63,5

Description

A trompe-l'oeil engraving depicting a collection of assignats, territorial warrants, and other monetary instruments issued during the French Revolution. This composition was created at a time when France was experiencing a profound financial crisis. To address the Treasury's difficulties, the Constituent Assembly introduced assignats in 1789, initially as securities backed by national property, before they gradually became a form of currency in their own right. Their massive issuance led to a rapid depreciation in value and high inflation. The assignats were finally replaced in 1796 by territorial warrants, which in turn proved to be a failure. The engraving brings together these various forms of paper money in a trompe-l'oeil composition, evoking both the abundance of these issues and

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the economic upheaval of the revolutionary period. In the center is a color-enhanced engraving depicting a beggar after Jacques Callot, whose presence reinforces the work's symbolic dimension by recalling the social consequences of this monetary crisis. The plate bears the signatures "Gatteaux inv." and "A. Tardieu sc." Nicolas-Marie Gatteaux (1751-1832) was an engraver, medalist, and draftsman. He helped design the revolutionary assignats and produced numerous official medals and engravings during the Revolution, the Consulate, and the Empire. Pierre-Alexandre Tardieu (1756-1844), a Parisian engraver, was one of the leading masters of the engraving chisel of his time. A member of the Academy of Fine Arts, he engraved the works of numerous artists and helped disseminate the great historical and allegorical compositions of the late 18th century. Serving as both a historical document, a testament to French monetary history, and a cabinet piece, this engraving illustrates a major episode of the French Revolution through a composition that blends the virtuosity of trompe-l'oeil, the precision of engraving, and symbolic significance. Presented in its original frame. France, late 18th century. Condition as shown in the photographs: wear, stains, tears.