



The Crossing Of The Red Sea, Workshop Of Frans Francken Ii, Antwerp, 17th Century, Oil On Wood



9 600 EUR

Signature : Atelier de Frans Francken II (Anvers, 1581-1642)

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting on wood

Width : 97 cm (encadré)

Height : 82 cm (encadré)

Description

The Crossing of the Red Sea Workshop of Frans Francken II (Antwerp, 1581-1642) Antwerp, first half of the 17th century Oil on oak panel Dimensions: H. 49.5 cm × W. 64.5 cm Moulded and ebonized wood frame with wide mouldings, with reversed profile Framed dimensions: H. 82 cm × W. 97 cm This work is sold with a certificate of authenticity guaranteeing its origin, date of execution and attribution to the artist. Click here to see the artwork on our website: <https://www.galerienicolaslente.com/en/the-crossing-of-the-red-sea-workshop-of-frans-francken-ii-17th-century-antwerp-school.htm> Our panel depicts one of the most celebrated episodes of the Old Testament, recounted in the Book of Exodus: the Crossing of the Red Sea. Having

Dealer

Galerie Nicolas Lenté

Old Masters from 16th to 18th century

Mobile : 06 64 42 84 66

2, rue des Saints-Pères

Paris 75007

escaped Pharaoh's army through Moses' intervention, the Israelites reach the opposite shore safely, while the waters close over their Egyptian pursuers. The richly conceived composition is structured around a broad and animated foreground populated by a multitude of elegantly dressed figures. At the center, a group gathers around the coffin containing the remains of the patriarch Joseph. Numerous mothers nursing or carrying their children allude to the redemption of the firstborn, while precious goldsmiths' works and vessels taken from Egypt are scattered at their feet. The small monkey seated in the foreground--a recurring motif in Flemish painting--adds a picturesque touch and reflects Frans Francken's fondness for anecdotal detail. In the background, Moses, accompanied by Aaron, raises his staff as the waters engulf the Egyptian army in a dramatic whirlpool. Rendered on a smaller scale, this episode creates a remarkable sense of depth and naturally guides the viewer's eye through the successive moments of the biblical narrative. The composition's richness lies in the profusion of figures, each distinguished by individual poses and costumes. A lively rhythm animates the scene, reinforced by the horse at the center, which serves as a visual pivot. The rolling landscape, with its luminous greens and majestic trees, freely transposes the biblical account into a distinctly Flemish setting, revealing the Antwerp artists' preference for adapting sacred subjects to a contemporary Northern European environment. The warm, refined palette, together with the meticulous rendering of shimmering textiles, expressive faces, and luxurious accessories, attests to the high quality of execution, combining exquisite attention to detail with exceptional narrative clarity. Frans Francken II treated the subject of the Crossing of the Red Sea on several occasions, varying the arrangement of the figures and compositional elements from one version to another. Several examples are recorded in Ursula Härting's monograph (Frans Francken II, 1989,

pp. 236-239). Many of these works were executed with the participation of his workshop, particularly his son Hieronymus Francken III, and are now preserved in European museums as well as in important private collections. Beyond its religious significance, this iconography acquired a political dimension during the 17th century. The deliverance of the Hebrew people was frequently interpreted as an allegory of the struggle of the Dutch Republic against Spanish rule, culminating in the formal recognition of its independence in 1648.

Related Works

Dorotheum, Vienna, sale of 22 October 2019, *The Crossing of the Red Sea*, by Hieronymus Francken III, oil on copper, 50.5 × 67.5 cm.

Musée de Tessé, Le Mans, *The Crossing of the Red Sea*, workshop of Frans Francken II (1581-1642), oil on panel.

Koller, Zurich, sale of 18 September 2009, lot 3052, *The Crossing of the Red Sea*, by Hieronymus Francken III, oil on panel, 51.2 × 73.5 cm.

Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, c. 1620, attributed to Hieronymus Francken III, oil on panel, 47.5 × 71.8 cm.

Hamburger Kunsthalle, *The Israelites Resting by the Red Sea*, 1621, by Tobias Verhaecht and Frans Francken II, oil on panel, 60.5 × 105 cm.

Rouillac, Vendôme, sale of 10 June 2018, *The Crossing of the Red Sea*, oil on panel, 93.5 × 123.5 cm (also featuring the monkey motif).

Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, *The Crossing of the Red Sea*, c. 1625, oil on oak panel, 45 × 47 cm, by Frans Francken II, signed ffranck (the group surrounding Joseph's tomb is particularly comparable).