



Saint Anthony With The Child, Oil On Copper - Antique Engraving Plate From The 17th-18th Centuries



950 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Etat d'usage

Material : Copper

Width : 39

Height : 52

Description

A very unique oil on copper painting depicting Saint Anthony of Padua holding the Infant Jesus, accompanied by cherubs in the clouds. The saint is depicted in his Franciscan habit, holding the Child in his arms. In the foreground are his traditional attributes: the book and the lilies, while the particularly gentle composition is brought to life by the exchange of glances between the two figures. The work displays a beautiful aged patina, with craquelure, wear, and signs of age that bear witness to its history. But the true uniqueness of this painting is revealed on the reverse side. The copper plate used as a support is in fact an antique intaglio engraving matrix, fully engraved on its reverse side and evidently reused later by the painter. This large plate, measuring 52 × 39 cm, features an

Dealer

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extremely elaborate allegorical composition: monumental architecture, female figures, putti, crowned coats of arms, and numerous symbolic attributes--a rooster, lamp, ears of grain, weapons, and various emblems. The texts are naturally engraved in mirror image, since they were intended to appear the right way up after being printed on paper. Among the perfectly legible Latin inscriptions is notably: "PERVIGIL HIC MODERATOR ERIT" This motto accompanies a figure holding a lit lamp next to a rooster, an iconography traditionally associated with Vigilance and, likely in this case, with the idea of good governance or the vigilant ruler. The die also bears an ancient signature followed by the Latin phrase "faciebat", traditionally used to designate the work's creator. Its complete reading has yet to be determined, and we prefer not to propose a speculative attribution. An inscription painted in red on the side depicting Saint Anthony appears to read: "Restored on the 25th of 7bre 1894", where "7bre" is the old abbreviation for September. This notation thus constitutes an interesting record of an earlier restoration, and not, in our view, the date the painting was created. Taken as a whole, the piece is particularly charming: a work with two layers of meaning, bringing together on a single plate an old religious painting and, hidden on the reverse, a genuine allegorical engraving matrix. The plate appears to predate the 19th century and likely dates from the 17th or 18th centuries. The painting also appears to date to the 18th century, subject to further study. To date, we have not found a printed proof that corresponds exactly to this plate. Dimensions: 52 × 39 cm. In its original condition with wear, crazing, scuffing, and minor imperfections visible in the photographs. The plate and its painting have been deliberately preserved in the condition in which they were discovered. A rare curiosity, at the intersection of old master painting, engraving, and the history of printing techniques.