



The Cleansing Of The Temple - Late 18th Century European School

1 800 EUR



Signature : École européenne de la fin du XVIIIe siècle

Period : 18th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Pastel

Width : 33cm

Height : 22cm

Description

This wonderful drawing depicts 'The Cleansing of the Temple', a biblical narrative where Christ expels merchants and the money changers from the Temple in Jerusalem. This is recounted in all four canonical gospels of the New Testament. In these accounts, Christ and his disciples travel to Jerusalem for Passover. It is here where Christ comes across merchants and consumers in the Temple and in turn accuses them of turning it into a 'den of thieves' (Synoptic Gospels) and a 'house of trade' (Gospel of John) through their commercial activities. Consequently, Christ drives out all of those who were buying and selling on the Temple site, overthrowing the tables of the moneychangers. The scene has been widely depicted in Christian art, becoming increasingly popular in the latter half of the

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sixteenth century. This was largely due to that fact that the story was promoted by the Council of Trent as a symbol of the Catholic church's attempt to purify itself after the Protestant Reformation. This drawing is dominated by the figure of Christ, leaning into the space from the left, with his disciples standing just behind. Christ, as the key figure is captured inflicting punishment on the traders with his right hand which holds a rope. In stark contrast the merchants occupy the right of the space, the group in the foreground clearly gambling with coins around a table. In this lively drawing, Christ is depicted as the central figure from whom all the other action flows - people scatter in the face of Christ's anger and all eyes are cast towards him. In the back right corner the innocent face of a child peaks out, also giving his attention to Christ. It is a rather minimal and intimate composition, the closed-in perspective removes anything more than a suggestion of the architecture. Indeed, the ranks of merchants and money-changers have been pared down to a few cringing individuals and the sacrificial oxen and sheep that are in the Biblical story are noticeably absent. Indeed, the only animals present are a pair of doves that sit on top of a female's head in the background.