



18th Century, Virgin And Child With Two Cherubs - Madonna Of The Chair



2 800 EUR

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting on copper

Width : 21

Height : 22,5

Description

18th century Virgin and Child with Two Cherubs - Madonna of the Chair Oil on copper, 22.5 x 21 cm With frame, 39 x 37.5 cm This small oil-on-copper painting offers a unique dual interpretation: on the front is the Madonna and Child flanked by two cherubs, while the reverse side, utilizing the same metal plate, depicts a replica of Raphael Sanzio's famous *Madonna della Seggiola*, now housed at the Palazzo Pitti in Florence. This compositional choice is not accidental: in the nineteenth century, it was common practice in fine arts academies to have young painters practice copying from life and from the old masters, often using both sides of a support to make the most of expensive materials such as copper--a surface favored for its enamel-like rendering of colors and long-lasting

Dealer

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preservation. Copper thus became a small educational workshop, a tangible testament to the technical and stylistic training conducted using the masterpieces of the past. The composition on the front is based on an original by Carlo Maratta (1625-1713), now housed at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, where the Virgin holds the sleeping Child while two cherubs gaze tenderly at the sacred group. The popularity of this model among the artist from the Marche region is confirmed by the existence of another, smaller-scale version attributed to Maratta, preserved in the collections of the British National Trust: a variant that demonstrates how the compositional scheme was already circulating in multiple versions during the Baroque era, before being further taken up by 19th-century academic copyists. On the reverse, the decision to reproduce the Madonna della Seggiola reveals the 18th-century admiration for Raphael, considered the absolute model of compositional grace and chromatic harmony, and frequently assigned as a copying exercise in the Roman and Florentine academies, where students could study the original from life--first housed in the Uffizi and later in the Palazzo Pitti. This artifact therefore represents a valuable document of nineteenth-century figurative culture, in which the practice of copying--far from being mere imitation--serves as a tool for artistic training and the transmission of Italian pictorial heritage.