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17th Century, Portraits Of The Painters Jan Brueghel The Elder And Frans Snyders

3 600 EUR



Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Description

17th century Portraits of the painters Jan Brueghel the Elder and Frans Snyders Oil on canvas The pair of paintings presented here depicts two leading figures of the great Flemish painting movement of the early 17th century, recognizable through different artistic paths. In the portrait on the left, identification is made explicit by the inscription "IOANNES BREVGEL" visible at the bottom of the canvas, which leaves no doubt as to the identity of the subject: Jan Brueghel the Elder. In the portrait on the right, which lacks an inscription, recognition is achieved through physical resemblance, by comparing the facial features, build, and clothing with the famous portraits that Antoon van Dyck painted of his friend and collaborator Frans Snyders--images that were also rendered in etching and

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disseminated throughout Europe via prints, thus becoming a widely recognizable iconographic model even decades later. Jan Brueghel the Elder, son of the more famous Pieter Bruegel the Elder, was among the greatest masters of floral still lifes and landscapes, earning the nicknames "Brueghel of the Velvets," "Brueghel of the Flowers," and "Brueghel of Paradise." Frans Snyder, a student first of Pieter Brueghel the Younger and later of Hendrick van Balen, became the foremost Flemish specialist in animal still lifes and hunting scenes, often collaborating with Rubens and van Dyck himself on large altarpieces and decorative cycles. Both belonged to that generation of Antwerp painters who, between the late 16th century and the early decades of the 17th century, made Antwerp one of Europe's most prolific artistic centers, during a period of extraordinary flourishing that would soon go down in history as the Golden Age of Dutch painting. The origins of these two small portraits likely lie in a commission from a cultured collector, passionate about painting and eager to possess a sort of gallery of the artists who had made the Flemish school famous. In fact, it was not uncommon in the 17th century for series of portraits of painters to be created--often based on models already known through paintings, drawings, or engravings--intended to enrich cabinets of curiosities or private art collections with the very images of the leading figures of contemporary or recently past art. It is plausible that these two paintings were originally part of a larger cycle of artists' portraits--now largely lost or dispersed--conceived to ideally celebrate the memory and prestige of an entire generation of masters. A further element confirms the popularity and widespread circulation of these images: both portraits are explicitly referenced in printed biographical collections published during the 17th century--true illustrated compendia dedicated to the lives of the era's most important painters, which accompanied biographical profiles with an engraved likeness of the artist. The portrait of

Brueghel follows the style derived from a prototype created in van Dyck's workshop, now preserved in the Bavarian State Collections, while that of Snyder faithfully follows the iconography developed directly by van Dyck, which was later translated into etchings and became known throughout the continent. The two canvases, therefore, bear witness not only to the admiration for two great masters but also to the dense network of images and models--including paintings, drawings, and prints--that helped shape and pass down the very essence of Flemish painting during the Golden Age.