



English School, Late 18th Century, Family Portraits



3 600 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 28

Height : 36

Description

English School, last quarter of the 18th century
Family Portraits(4) Oil on canvas, 36 x 28 cm
This refined group of four oval portraits constitutes a cohesive and coherent example of the intimate, domestic portraiture that flourished in Britain during the final decades of the 18th century. The series depicts members of the same high-ranking family, including the head of the household, his wife, and their two young daughters (or their daughter and young son, still in his early years). The uniformity of the painterly execution, the consistent and measured application of color within elegant oval formats, and the use of an identical range of light suggest that the four canvases were conceived simultaneously by the same artist between 1780 and 1790. At this pivotal moment, British

Dealer

Ars Antiqua srl

Antiquaire généraliste

Tel : +39 02 29529057

Via C. Pisacane, 55 - 57

Milano 20129

painting was blending the legacy of the late Rococo with a renewed neoclassical taste, oriented toward a natural, spontaneous, and elegantly measured depiction of the subjects. From a stylistic and formal perspective, the series draws decisively on the prestigious legacy of George Romney (1734-1802), the undisputed master at capturing the fluid grace and immediate expressiveness of his subjects without indulging in excessive academic rigidity. The portrait of the gentleman fully embodies the elegant fashion of the late Georgian era. The subject is depicted wearing a powdered wig in shades of gray and lilac, styled in the typical side curls and gathered at the nape of the neck with a classic black silk ribbon. The understated and elegant powder-blue tailcoat, worn over a light-colored waistcoat embellished with embroidered details, conveys an image of measured aristocratic dignity, where the restrained posture and serene gaze perfectly adhere to the canons of English salon portraiture. The female figure brilliantly reflects the aesthetic promoted by British portraiture of the same period. Her wavy, voluminous hairstyle--gathered and allowed to fall in soft curls over her shoulders--is paired with a dress made of light, flowing fabric with an informal cut, cinched with light blue ribbons that accentuate the line of her torso. The iridescent blue drapery and the classically inspired background--enriched by a pillar and a delicate glimpse of trees--evoke the typical "outdoor" or garden setting cherished by English painting, which sought to blend the human figure with the surrounding natural atmosphere. In the two paintings dedicated to childhood, a deep adherence to British Enlightenment and empiricist sensibilities emerges--sensibilities that recognized childhood as possessing its own psychological and poetic autonomy, moving beyond the practice of depicting children as miniature adults. The small figures are depicted in soft white garments cinched at the waist with

pink sashes, in an informal and functional style. The symbolic attributes held in their hands--the bouquet of flowers, an allegory of purity and fleeting youth, and the small riding crop, an allusion to playful and dynamic activity--lend the series a distinct narrative freshness. The fluid brushwork, the softness of the skin tones blended into rosy hues, and the preference for a light and luminous palette--dominated by pastel shades of blue, pink, and warm earth tones--confirm that this work belongs to a skilled master of the English school working within the circle of, or under the direct influence of, George Romney, capable of combining high decorative quality with intense emotional truth.