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Pieter Van Avont (mechelen, 1600 - Deurne, 1652), Landscape With Saint John The Baptist And The Lamb

4 600 EUR



Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 45

Height : 31,5

Description

Pieter van Avont (Mechelen, 1600 - Deurne, 1652) Landscape with Saint John the Baptist and the Lamb Oil on canvas, 31.5 x 45 cm With frame, 48 x 61 cm Signed lower right P. Van Avont In a luminous wooded landscape of green and golden tones, a naked, chubby child stands at the center of the composition, his right hand outstretched in a gesture of blessing toward a lamb lying at his feet. With his left hand, the boy holds a long, pointed staff--an iconographic attribute that immediately identifies him as the young Saint John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, portrayed according to an iconographic tradition established during the Italian Renaissance and later widely adopted in 17th-century Flanders. The lamb, the quintessential symbol of Christ's sacrifice, rests on the ground with placid docility;

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its light-colored fleece is rendered with soft brushstrokes, and a warm light contours its body. The wooded background, rich in foliage stirred by diffused light, opens to the left onto a distant panorama where one can glimpse sloping hills and a sky streaked with luminous clouds, in a landscape composition typical of Flemish art. The work is signed by Pieter van Avont, a Flemish painter born in Mechelen to Hans van Avont, a sculptor, and Anna le Febure. He likely received his early training under his father's guidance, and in 1620 he was admitted as a master to the Mechelen Guild; he later moved to Antwerp, where around 1622-1623 he was granted the title of master in the prestigious Guild of Saint Luke, becoming a citizen of that city in 1631. His career unfolded within the fertile artistic milieu of 17th-century Antwerp, where collaboration among specialized painters was a common and essential practice. Van Avont collaborated with many of the city's most important painters, including Jan Brueghel the Elder and the Younger, David Vinckboons, Lucas van Uden, and Jacques d'Arthois, for whom he painted the human figures set within the landscapes created by his colleagues. Van Avont is primarily known for his religious and mythological scenes and for his so-called "cabinet paintings"--small- and medium-sized compositions intended for private devotion and collection. A recurring motif in his work is the presence of groups of nude children and cherubs, who, in the numerous versions of the Holy Family, appear as the Baby Jesus, St. John the Baptist, or angels. The style with which he renders these figures is characterized by a soft sense of volume achieved through the use of sfumato and warm colors. The painting under consideration fits squarely within this body of work and finds clear parallels in numerous works by the painter. In the **Bacchanal of Children** and the **Allegory of Autumn**, both held in private collections, the wooded landscape serving as the backdrop is entirely comparable to the one described here: the same dense, leafy tree lines,

the same interplay of shadows and glimmers of light among the branches, and the same perspective opening toward a distant horizon. Above all, these works feature children and cherubs whose physiques fully correspond to those of the young Saint John in the painting under consideration: round thighs, prominent bellies, and soft, warm complexions. Similar observations apply to the **Landscape with Dancing Putti** from the Royal Collection in London, where the same childlike figures come to life in a similar landscape setting, confirming that these figurative types were a true stylistic hallmark of the painter, revisited with slight variations throughout his entire career. Another specific comparison is offered by the **Rest on the Flight into Egypt with the Infant Saint John and Angels** from a private collection, in which the same figure of the Precursor returns to the foreground, here depicted in profile rather than head-on as in our painting, but with an identical bodily composition. In the **Allegory of Autumn** and the **Allegory of Spring**, housed at the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe, the same children appear once again, while in the **Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Elizabeth** at the Museum of Fine Arts in Besançon, the figure of John the Baptist appears in a more elaborate devotional context, again within a landscape of similar scope. Finally, the lamb lying at the saint's feet in the painting under consideration here finds a direct parallel in the one depicted in the **Rest on the Flight into Egypt with Saint John the Baptist and Angels** at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, where the rendering of the animal's coat and its posture are almost identical, confirming a well-established practice of reworking and varying figurative solutions that had already been successfully experimented with.