



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Flemish School, 17th Century, Nativity



1 200 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting on copper

Width : 21

Height : 29

Description

Flemish School, 17th century Nativity Oil on copper, 29 x 21 cm In the dim light of a stable, a single flame illuminates the scene and governs its entire lighting design. The oil on copper--a medium favored by 17th-century Flemish painters for its smooth, compact surface, which allows for a glazed rendering of forms--effectively recreates the composition conceived by Hendrick Goltzius for a print from 1615, some of whose first editions are housed in major museums such as the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the British Museum in London. In the center, Joseph--an elderly, bearded man wrapped in a green cloak--holds the candle that illuminates the newborn and extends his other hand in a gesture of welcome. To his right, the Virgin, with a youthful face, gently lifts the sheet to reveal the

Dealer

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Child, lying naked on a bed of straw that becomes the true chromatic focal point of the painting. On the left, two shepherds push their way forward to get a better view: one, in the foreground, clasps his hands in prayer with a moved smile, while the other leans over his shoulder with almost childlike curiosity. Even the ox, glimpsed behind the figures, seems to want to join in the veneration of the infant. In the background, an arch opens up, through which a landscape with ancient ruins can be glimpsed: a reference to the ruins of paganism, upon which, in Nativity iconography, Christianity is born. The creation of paintings based on compositions by great masters--which were disseminated through engravings--was a very common practice in 17th-century Flanders. Workshops and talented painters rendered the most famous compositions on various media, catering to a devout and cultured clientele who wished to own painted versions--often small in size--of subjects already appreciated in print art.