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## Sauvegarde (american Reptile) - Maria Sibilla Merian (1647-1717)

1 400 EUR



Signature : Maria Sibylla Merian

Period : 18th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Width : 56

Height : 46

### Description

Our spectacular and rare engraving is plate 70 from the book *\*Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium\**, which brings together Maria Sibylla Merian's engraved drawings of insects and animals. Second edition, 1719. In this historical context, the term "Sauvegarde" refers to a large lizard (a tegu, an Amazonian reptile) depicted in its natural habitat. In Tupi, an Amerindian language, "tégu" means "silvery." Even today, the scientific name of this reptile, "*Salvator merianae*," pays homage to Anna Maria Sibylla Merian, the first observer to have described it. The artistic qualities of our print can be attributed to Maria Sibylla's training as a still-life painter. The anatomical accuracy stems from her early passion for entomology and her use of the microscope, which allowed her to reproduce the

### Dealer

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Old masters paintings

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finest details. Our artist's thirst for knowledge led her to undertake a perilous study trip to Suriname in 1699, from which she brought back numerous unpublished studies and dried insects. From then on, she worked as much as an artist as a scientist that she published her "Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium" in 1705. This major compilation, the result of her journey to the Americas, served as a reference work for leading scientists, such as Carl von Linné, who cited her illustrations 136 times in his comprehensive taxonomy of species. Our print is mounted in a gilded frame, behind mat board and anti-reflective, UV-protective glass. Dimensions: 28 x 38 cm - 46 x 56 cm with the frame

Biography: Maria Sibylla Merian (Frankfurt, April 2, 1647 - Amsterdam, Jan. 13, 1717) discovered drawing through her stepfather, the still-life painter Jacob Marrel. His studio contained a collection of dried plants and insects that the young Maria practiced copying. However, by the age of 13, she realized that studying live specimens would allow her to achieve a more accurate representation of reality. Thus, she recounted having "set aside her social life and devoted all her time to observing insects and honing her skills as a painter, so that she might draw and paint specimens as they appear in nature." Both a publisher and an artist, Maria Sibylla Merian headed a prolific studio where many other women worked--women whom the guilds often denied access to grand historical painting. Her two daughters, Johanna Helena Herolt (1668-1723) and Dorothea Maria Henrietta Gsell (1678-1743), spent most of their careers in the family studio, to the point that it is often difficult to distinguish their works from those of their mother.

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