



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Youqua (active 1840-1880) And His Studio "women In A Chinese Garden" Canton China Chinnery

5 800 EUR



Signature : YOUQUA (act. 1840-1880) et son atelier

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Description

YOUQUA (act. 1840-1880) and his workshop« Women in a Chinese Garden »Original oil on canvas, Label on the back of the stretcher from the artist's workshop: "Youqua Painter, Old Street, No.34"Provenance: Private French collection We can link our work to other creations by the artist Youqua on this theme, notably the exceptional series of 18 Chinese paintings found in the Museum's storerooms in 2005 by Geneviève Lacambre. Kept today at the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de La Rochelle, these completely unprecedented works are attributed to Youqua, a 19th-century artist considered one of the most talented painters of the export trade. A book titled "De couleurs et d'Encre, Oeuvres restaurées par le Musée d'art et d'histoire de La Rochelle", retracing this discovery and the

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restoration of the artist's paintings, will be provided. An exceptional work from around 1850 by the Chinese painter Youqua and his workshop, depicting three elegant Qing dynasty women gathered in a paved inner courtyard, at the heart of a garden structured by long stone benches supporting a profusion of turquoise and brown ceramic pots filled with flowers. On the left, a first woman dressed in an azure blue gown with wide embroidered borders stands near a large, robust tree, delicately holding a circular white fan. On the right, two women stand on the central path, consisting of one woman in a sumptuous salmon-pink tunic embroidered with blue floral patterns and another in a dark blue dress leaning toward her in an attitude of tender complicity. The background is dominated by the landscape, where a large boundary wall pierced in its center by a majestic circular moon gate, topped by a horizontal cartouche with red inscriptions, opens the perspective toward another wooded section of the estate. The architectural composition is framed by dense, lush vegetation that creates an intimate canopy effect, while a clear sky dotted with clouds brings beautiful luminosity to the scene. In this work, the artist demonstrates remarkable virtuosity in the rendering of the figures, whose traditional heavy silk garments are enhanced by embroidery of almost microscopic fineness. Each floral border and each fold of fabric bear witness to an extraordinary sense of detail. This meticulousness is also found in the rendering of the skin, the softness of the faces, and the serenity of the expressions, painted with a subtlety that brings these three elegant ladies of the Qing dynasty to life. The garden serving as the backdrop benefits from the same goldsmith-like treatment. The painter infuses an impressive accuracy into the representation of the flora, from the shaded petals of the flowering plants to the rough texture of the tree bark on the left. The multiple details of the decor, the discreet reflections on the large ceramic pottery, and the geometric alignment of the architectural

structures reveal total technical mastery. Through this work of immense patience, the painter succeeds in balancing Western realism and Asian refinement in a painting of absolute clarity. This work bears witness to the encounter between Asian pictorial traditions and 19th-century European artistic codes. Here, Youqua uses oil painting, a Western technique learned from figures like George Chinnery. There is also a notable application of three-dimensional perspective for structures, alongside precise work on shadows and volumes. Despite these external contributions, the general aesthetic, furnishings, and refinement of the garments remain deeply rooted in Chinese culture. Youqua is one of the most emblematic 19th-century painters in the field of Chinese export painting, an artistic movement that embodies the unique cultural and commercial encounter between Asia and the West at the heart of southern China's ports. As was often the case for artisans of this era, his personal biography remains largely unknown, and his studio name likely stems from a commercial combination pairing part of his given name with the honorific suffix commonly used by Cantonese merchants in contact with foreigners. His artistic activity is formally documented between 1840 and 1870, a pivotal period marked by major geopolitical mutations and the forced opening of new trading posts. Demonstrating a keen business sense, the artist first established his main shop in the heart of Canton's Western factories, on the famous Old China Street, before becoming one of the very first creators to expand his activities by opening a prosperous branch on Queen's Road in Hong Kong. This dual location allowed his workshop to gain immense renown among European and American merchants and ship captains, who quickly came to regard it as the best establishment in the region. Behind the global signature of Youqua lies, in reality, a highly organized artisanal structure where the master supervised a team of specialized assistants and apprentices. This collective production

method made it possible to efficiently meet the heavy demand from travelers while maintaining an exceptional standard of quality, visible in the mastery of varied techniques such as gouache on pith paper or oil painting on canvas. Heavily influenced by Western methods introduced by European artists like George Chinnery, the workshop virtuously integrated three-dimensional perspective, the play of cast shadows, and the realistic rendering of volumes, while retaining a theme deeply rooted in Chinese iconography. The house's productions are distinguished by an incredible delicacy in portraits of high-society women, the refinement of traditional garments, as well as a surgical precision in harbor or botanical landscapes. Today, the works originating from his studio are celebrated as precious historical and artistic testimonies. Note: Old minor restorations, without consequence, are to be noted and are visible on the back of the canvas. Our work can form a pendant with the artist's second work currently for sale, as they share the same theme, the same provenance, the same dimensions, and the same framing. Dimensions: 46 x 60 cm without frame and 60 x 74 cm with its original carved and gilded wood frame. A few minor damages and restorations are to be noted on the frame. For more information, please contact us.