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# Barend Graat (amsterdam, 1628-1708), The Education Of Three Children By Minerva And Ceres



6 400 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 94

Height : 80

## Description

Barend Graat (Amsterdam, 1628-1708)The Education of Three Children by Minerva and CeresOil on canvas, 80 x 94 cmSigned and dated lower left "B. Graat f / 1694"Barend Graat's painting *The Education of Three Children by Minerva and Ceres* presents itself as a sumptuous mythological allegory in which the intimate nature of portraiture blends with the courtly solemnity of 17th-century classicism. Set in a garden that fades into blue-tinged hills, the painting is framed by monumental architecture and ancient-style sculptures that lend the scene a theatrical air. Minerva, the goddess of wisdom and the arts, dominates the composition, wearing a feathered helmet and a dark robe, while with a decisive gesture she points the young students toward the path of knowledge and virtue. Beside

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her, Ceres, the goddess of the earth and prosperity, watches over them with a protective gaze, holding symbols of fertility in her hands that evoke harmonious growth. The three children, whose delicately drawn faces suggest they were modeled from life, participate in the scene with composure: one of them is petting a small dog, while the others are busy picking flowers or observing the deities. The entire iconographic composition was likely conceived for a prestigious noble family in Amsterdam, with the aim of highlighting the parents'--and in particular the mother's--commitment to raising their children according to the principles of wisdom and morality. In this "portrait historié," it is reasonable to assume that one of the goddesses--likely Ceres, given her association with maternal care--bears a resemblance to the mother herself.Barend Graat, the artist behind this masterful oil on canvas, was born and baptized in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam in 1629, the city where he spent his entire life. According to sources, Graat learned the art of painting under the guidance of his uncle Hans, demonstrating a versatile talent from an early age. Although he never visited Italy, he masterfully mastered the style of Italianate landscapes and genre scenes in the manner of Pieter van Laer, populating his views with farmyard animals rendered with extreme realism, a skill that made him famous and enabled him to train prominent students such as Johann Heinrich Roos. His works, usually signed "B. Graat fecit" (as in this case), reveal meticulous attention to detail and a deep knowledge of classical texts, nurtured by his contacts with intellectuals of the time, including the poet Jan Vos. The stability of his career was cemented by his marriage in 1660 to a young widow and by the purchase of a plot of land on the Leidsegracht, where he had a residence built that reflected his high social status. His family life was rooted in the Catholic faith, as evidenced by the baptism of his two daughters in one of the city's "hidden" churches in 1668 and 1670. In

addition to easel painting, Graat was an authoritative figure in the Amsterdam art market. In 1672, he was among the experts commissioned to assess the authenticity of Gerrit Uylenburgh's controversial collection, demonstrating exceptional technical expertise. For over fifteen years, he transformed his home into a private academy, where he passed on the secrets of the craft to new generations, cementing his reputation as a master. The choice of Minerva and Ceres to educate the children in the work under consideration reflects precisely this atmosphere of refined erudition: Minerva educates the spirit and the intellect, while Ceres nourishes the body and the heart, embodying that symbiosis between wisdom and nature that lay at the heart of the pedagogical ideal of the Dutch Golden Age. Graat's artistic legacy was ultimately preserved and disseminated by his grandson Matthijs Pool, paying tribute to the versatility of a painter who was able to translate mythology into an intimate, family-oriented narrative of maternal care and devotion.