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Antique Polychrome Majolica Anthropomorphic Salt Shaker From Ariano Irpino, 18th Century



850 EUR

Signature : XVIIe siècle, Ariano Irpino (Campanie)

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Earthenware

Width : 11

Height : 23

Depth : 11

Description

Anthropomorphic salt shaker in polychrome majolica - Ariano Irpino, 17th century
17th century, Ariano Irpino (Campania)
Anthropomorphic salt shaker
Polychrome majolica, H 23 cm; base 11 × 11 cm
A rare and curious figurative salt shaker in polychrome majolica, attributable to the production of Ariano Irpino, in Campania, dating to the 17th century. The object stands out for its unusual anthropomorphic form: a standing female figure, modeled in the round, which transforms a tableware item into a small decorative sculpture. The female figure is characterized by a large green headdress and a dress decorated with vibrant yellow, light blue, and green fields, outlined with brown strokes. The deliberately expressive modeling lends the figure an

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Mobile : +39 329 319 4887

Via Novara, 6

Omegna 28887

immediate and folksy character, in which artisanal skill is paired with remarkable formal inventiveness. The figurative form is designed in relation to its function as a salt container, following a style that transforms a household object into a small table sculpture. The brilliant polychromy and sculptural construction make this piece a significant testament to the formal creativity developed by the ceramic workshops of southern Italy. The production in Ariano Irpino, in what is now the province of Avellino, boasts a long ceramic tradition, known for its folk-style majolica, characterized by original forms, sunny colors, and narrative-style decorations.

Anthropomorphic salt shakers and other figurative vessels constitute one of the most distinctive expressions of this tradition. Comparable examples are housed at the Palazzo Davanzati Museum in Florence, where figurative salt shakers attributed to the Campania workshops--and, in some cases, to the production in Ariano Irpino--are

documented. Anthropomorphic salt shakers are particularly interesting objects because they combine the history of dietary habits with that of the decorative arts. Salt, a precious ingredient in food preservation and preparation, was presented at the table in vessels that could take on elaborate and surprising forms. In this example, the utilitarian function becomes an opportunity for sculptural creativity, evoking the spirit of a material culture rich in imagination.

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