PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Attributed To Carle Van Loo, C. 1752-57; Portrait Of Jean-pierre Pagin, The King's Violinist



25 000 EUR

Signature : Carle Van Loo

Period : 18th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Length : 56cm

Width : 45,5

Depth : 2cm

Description

This portrait depicts the violinist Jean-Pierre Pagin (born in 1721) at around the age of 35. A brilliant student of Giuseppe Tartini, he introduced the Italian style of performance to France and caused a sensation at the Concert Spirituel before devoting himself exclusively to private performances for the aristocracy. While the Van Loo family dynasty dominated 18th-century French portraiture, the minute techniques of this painting's surface set Carle apart from his relatives and confirm his distinctive style. The skin displays its famous porcelain-like luminosity, achieved through the layering of extremely fine, translucent glazes that make the rosy cheeks glow. The eyes bear his signature style: the point of light--a touch of white, wet impasto applied with absolute

Dealer

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precision to the iris, which breathes life into the subject. The gold embroidery on the red waistcoat is not confined to a rigid geometric pattern, but is rendered with rich, confident, and impressionistic brushstrokes that mimic the movement of shimmering light. A cluster of converging clues confirms that this painting was not a commercial or government commission, but rather a deeply intimate portrait of friendship, painted for the artist's personal collection: With its non-standard dimensions of 56 cm x 45.5 cm, this canvas breaks away from the standard formats of the time, proving that it was cut and stretched directly in the studio for an informal exercise.The inscription of the name "Pagin" directly on the front margin of the canvas is a classic studio inventory method, allowing Van Loo or his assistants to identify the model during storage.Its stylistic informality stands in stark contrast to official commissions, which featured allegorical motifs, musical scores, or instruments to highlight the subject's field of expertise. Pagin is painted against a neutral, dark, and intimate background, emphasizing a warm and spontaneous human connection between artists.In the 1750s, Carle van Loo and Jean-Pierre Pagin shared close ties within society and were celebrated together by intellectuals at the Salons--such as Denis Diderot--as two luminaries of French genius. This painting is a private tribute to the mutual admiration between these two icons of the Age of Enlightenment.