Cleopatra - Guido Cagnacci (1601-1681)



40 000 EUR

Signature : Guido Cagnacci (1601 - 1681)

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 49

Height : 65,5

Description

The painting depicts Cleopatra in the moment before her death, shown in half-length as she holds the asp to her breast. Her head tilted back, her gaze turned upward, and her parted lips convey that combination of sensuality, abandonment, and emotional tension that is one of the most characteristic features of Guido Cagnacci's painting.In his 2012 expert opinion, Nicholas Turner unhesitatingly confirms the work's authenticity, highlighting the quality of the paint, the softness of the brushstrokes, and the distinctive luminosity of the skin tones. The scholar highlights, above all, the refined modulation of the chiaroscuro transitions on the face and neck, as well as the delicate touches of light in the eyes, on the tip of the nose, on the earring, and on the fingers. Turner also draws a

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connection between the head of this Cleopatra and that of Saint Agatha, known from two autograph versions--one already in a private collection in Bologna and the other at the Banca Popolare dell'Emilia-Romagna in Modena--both generally dated to around 1640. The close resemblance between the two models suggests that Cagnacci reused the same facial design, in accordance with a common practice in his depiction of female figures. Turner also compares the painting to two other versions of Cleopatra, one housed at the Museo della Città in Rimini and the other formerly on the Genoese antiquities market. Compared to these, the present composition stands out for the figure's more expansive proportions and the particular luminosity of the skin tones. Andrea Emiliani, too, in his 2014 entry, attributes the work to the artist's period of full maturity, around the mid-1630s, when Cagnacci gradually softened the more pronounced naturalistic contrasts of his early period to move toward a softer, more classicist style, strongly influenced by the example of Guido Reni. The reclined head, the eyes turned toward the sky, and the expression suspended between pain and ecstasy are indeed drawn from Reni's repertoire, though reinterpreted by Cagnacci through a more intense sensual and psychological engagement. The light--glancing across her chest and more dramatic on her face--helps to give the figure a vivid, physical presence, transforming the ancient heroine into an image of intense humanity. The painting thus belongs to one of the most representative groups in Cagnacci's oeuvre--that of female heroines captured at the climax of their stories--a theme the artist would further develop in his celebrated mature works. Framed. The work is accompanied by a critical report by Nicholas Turner, dated August 16, 2012, and by a critical report by Andrea Emiliani, dated Bologna, October 15, 2014. The attribution was also confirmed through verbal consultation with Nicoletta Rojo and Emilio Negro.