



Ecorché In Bronze Italy - Circa 1600



Description

Standing in a slight contrapposto, the man turns his head to his left, his right arm follows along the body with the thumb and index finger joined, the left arm is slightly open. This superb flayed bronze rests on a posterior plinth made of two types of marble: Siena marble and antique green marble. From the 16th century, an unprecedented interest in anatomy developed in Italy, combining science and art in an unprecedented way. This rediscovery of anatomy involves many changes, particularly concerning the almost "cartoonesque" vision of the human body, a legacy of ancient medicine. For centuries, physicians and physicists believed that disease resulted from an imbalance of the four humours that make up the body: blood, lymph, yellow bile and black bile. With this vision of medicine, anatomy played a very

9 000 EUR

Period : 16th century

Condition : Très belle patine, quelques manques aux mains et un orteil au pied droit

Material : Bronze

Height : 42 cm avec le socle, 32 cm sans le socle

Dealer

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limited role due to a general misunderstanding of the role of the organs, the blood circulation system and a misunderstanding of basic chemistry. But thanks to this new interest in anatomy from the 14th century and especially during the 16th century, a new science of healing developed based on a principle found in our modern medicine: if an organ is sick then the treatment must be applied to said organ rather than to the body as a whole. This scientific revolution is also observed, as so often, within artistic creation. It should be remembered that at that time the manuscripts formerly copied by the monks were transformed into printed matter and the technological revolution of the printing press allowed rapid and international production and distribution of works. Being a science that requires the description of visual forms: anatomy needs images, especially images that can be reproduced with the precision of an impression. This is one of the reasons for the involvement of artists. If printers and engravers were initially the major players in this strange and unique interdisciplinary collaboration; some artists end up becoming anatomists themselves: allowing them to develop anatomical reality in their creations. Creating, independent of any medicine, anatomical images that are sometimes more advanced and precise than those produced by professional anatomists. It was not until the middle of the 16th century that "hard" science regained the upper hand and obtained total control over anatomical illustrations. It is with great names like Michelangelo and especially Da Vinci that the interest of artists for anatomy reached its zenith: artist and complete scientist, Leonardo made many discoveries thanks to dissections, which allowed him to refute theories ancient hitherto in place. As for Michelangelo, he studied anatomy exclusively to perfect his art but pushed his knowledge of the muscular system to the extreme. The study of muscles and skeletons becomes, from this moment, an important part of the apprenticeship of artists: a good knowledge of

the human body for a better representation in art. As said before scientists end up assuming a dominant role in anatomical illustration. To cite only him: Andreas Vasalius, a scientist who studied medicine in Paris and Italy, published in 1543 in Basel, *De humani corporis fabrica* (About the making of the human body). This work is a foundation for modern anatomy and participates in the evolution of the representation of man and living things. In addition to its scientific content which revolutionizes medicine, what makes this treatise exceptional is the fact that its author, although a scientist by training, supervises the illustrations produced for his work: thus combining artistic quality with scientific rigor and precision. Illustrated by several artists such as pupils of Titian, Jan Calcar or even Vasalius himself, this work is still considered today as one of the most beautiful books in the world, in particular thanks to the quality of its illustration plates. One of them represents a flayed person: staged in a bucolic landscape, a man standing without skin, which therefore reveals his entire muscular system. This founding work marks the beginning of a new period in medical matters, but also appears as the culmination of this scientific thought dating from the 14th century. The popularity of the book is also measured by the number of plagiarisms and partial copies that follow. Until the end of the 17th century, the majority of anatomical treatises included parts of texts and illustrations copied or inspired by the *Fabrica*. The board of the *Ecorché* is no exception and to cite just one: Gaspar Becerra produced a very similar *Ecorché* around 1556 to illustrate the work of the Spaniard Juan de Valverde de Amusco, *Historia de la composicion del cuerpo humano*. Through the creation and dissemination of these copies, the representation of the flayed man became standardized: a man standing, his head raised and turned, one arm open and the other holding the piece of skin from the thigh he had just taken off. 'to tear out. Initially confined to engraving and illustrative drawings, the theme

of the skinned person reached other areas of artistic creation over time, notably the small bronze statues which were used as models for anatomical studies for students and apprentice artists. In the 18th and 19th centuries, interest in the *écorché* evolved: it became an object of curiosity. The anatomical precision of the muscular system is sometimes reduced in favor of aesthetics, bronze is favored to create quality and prestigious objects and above all the postures can vary (archer releasing an arrow, flayed man philosophizing on his own existence, athlete rest...). Our cutaway is to be placed in this period of transition in the vision, representation and understanding of the human body. Perfect example of the object that intrigued collectors, it is striking for the great finesse of the carving and its realism.