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Auction Decorative Art

Date 18.05.2022, ca. 14:39

Preview 13.05.2022 - 10:00:00 bis
16.05.2022 - 18:00:00

DRAMATIC PORTRAYAL OF A TORMENTED IN DEATH WITH CASKET.

Germany.

Date: Around 1700.

Technique: Carved bone and wood, silver appliquéés with coloured enamel decorations. Lined with velvet.

Description: Rectangular box on four flattened ball feet with cassette construction and gable architecture with fruit festoons on the sides. Silver ornaments with finely coloured enamel decorations, mounted in the fields on all sides. Small cherubs on each of the upper corners. On one of the narrow sides a small knob for opening the large drawer. Concealed within is the intensely strained figure of a decaying man, leaning on his elbows with his head thrown back and turned slightly to the left. Hollow-eyed and emaciated, he writhes on his bed, pierced by snakes. The full, curly hair contrasts this state in an enthralling way. The figure is mounted on a rectangular plate, also with cassette-like structures and on four flattened ball feet.

Measurement: Casket 12,5x29,5x15cm. Figurine of man on base 23,5x9,5x7cm.

The box and also the rectangular plate with the figure are reminiscent of stone or marble sarcophagi due to the structure and also the colouring of the bone. Thus they provide a kind of surrounding backdrop for the body of the martyred figure.

The beauty of horror The empty eye sockets seem wide open, the face pain-distorted and expressive. From the splayed toes to the cramped hands grasping the snakes, the protruding muscles or the pressed-through cross: the whole body writhes in tense dynamics. If we look at the figure in its leg-panelled coffin, we do not see a lifeless, dead body, but rather a personification of ruin and pain. The work of art is entirely in the tradition of a special form of devotional object that is intended to induce *meditatio mortis*. For this inward encounter with death, it holds up a mirror to the viewer, showing him his unavoidable fate: *Memento Mori* - Remember that you will die! Like many other such devotional objects, our Tormented One was created at a time when science and art were increasingly converging. An increased interest in and understanding of human anatomy was coupled in these objects with a fascination for the unfathomable theme of the transience of earthly life. The richly detailed, naturalistic depiction, executed in masterly craftsmanship, captivates the eye. Death is aestheticised, becomes something terribly beautiful and thus triggers a morbid fascination in the viewer. The drastic nature of the macabre details heightens the intensity of the visual experience.

Estimate: 18.000 € - 20.000 €
