

SA1187539

The Harlequin, 1918: poignant
avant grande oil on board

Price

Sold

Item Reference: SA1187539

Date of manufacture: 1910

Dimensions

Height = 41 cm (16.1")

Width = 33 cm (13.0")

Depth = 1 cm (0.4")

Description

Painted in 1918, the year of Alfred Rigny's return from the front lines of World War I, this work is a profound document of the post-war "Return to Order." Among the many artists who participated in the movement were notable figures in modernism such as Picasso and Braque, Matisse and many of the Italian Futurists. Artists of the Return to Order placed high emphasis on the classical ideals of rationality, quality of line, illusionism and order, in opposition to the preceding decades of irrationality and emotional turbulence in modern art. While the setting here is clearly the circus—complete with a golden ring and a sweeping red curtain—the subject is far from a simple entertainer. Rigny (1887-1954) uses the Harlequin, the figure of the Commedia dell'arte, as a mirror for the human condition. In the wake of the Great War, the Harlequin's mask became a powerful symbol for the "Lost Generation." He represents the duality of the survivor: the man required to "perform" and return to social normalcy while carrying the silent, heavy weight of his experiences. The Harlequin's gaze and the muted, earthy tones of his face suggest a vulnerability that is deeply moving. Born in ...

Seller Details

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