

19TH CENTURY EDWIN HUGHES SIGNED OIL PAINTING “THE COURT JESTER”, DATED 1875

$3,900

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Bring the romance and pageantry of the Victorian medieval revival into your home with this charming antique genre painting. Crafted in England circa 1875, the oil on canvas is signed and dated lower left by Edwin Hughes (1842-1901), an accomplished British painter active in London during the latter half of the 19th Century. Hughes exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy between 1872 and 1890 and is listed in the prestigious Bénézit Dictionary of Artists. Renowned for his richly detailed historical genre scenes, he worked in a style strongly influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite movement, combining meticulous draftsmanship, vibrant color, and an enduring fascination with medieval romance.
Titled “The Court Jester,” the composition portrays a brightly attired court musician entertaining two elegantly dressed noblewomen within an opulent medieval interior. Seated on a cushioned stool, the jester plays a lute while the ladies listen attentively, their elaborate gowns and headdresses rendered with remarkable precision. Behind them, painted heraldic banners, mounted knights, and courtly decoration enrich the narrative, while carved furnishings, decorative ceramics, heavy drapery, and a geometric tiled floor create a convincing and atmospheric palace setting.
Hughes masterfully balances theatrical storytelling with refined academic technique. Brilliant greens, crimson reds, soft blues, and warm earth tones guide the eye through the composition, while the finely observed costumes and architectural details demonstrate the artist’s appreciation for medieval craftsmanship and romantic historicism. The intimate scale and engaging subject make the painting equally suited for a study, library, music room, or living room.
The reverse retains exceptional supporting documentation, including the original handwritten gallery note describing the painting, a 1993 professional conservation report detailing cleaning and restoration, and biographical references on the artist. The canvas has been professionally conserved and lined, preserving both its beauty and structural integrity.
Housed in its giltwood frame, the antique painting presents beautifully with a warm, mellow patina and light age-appropriate craquelure consistent with a 19th Century oil on canvas.
The antique painting is in excellent condition commensurate with age and use.
Dimensions: 33.25” W × 18” H

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