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Auction Fine Art

Date 15.05.2023, ca. 14:52

Preview 11.05.2023 - 10:00:00 bis
14.05.2023 - 16:00:00

GESSI, GIOVAN FRANCESO
Bologna 1588 - 1649

Title: Christ with a Child.
According to Matthew, chapter 18.
Date: Ca. 1620.
Technique: Oil on canvas.
Mounting: Relined.
Measurement: 215 x 116cm.
Frame: Framed.

Provenance:
Private ownership, Germany;
Private ownership, Italy.

Literature:
E. Negro and M. Pirondini, La scuola di Guido Reni, Modena 1991, p. 240, ill. 253.

Giovan Francesco Gessi is considered one of Guido Reni's most famous apprentices and the most reliable interpreter of his master's style: he painted many works entrusted to him by Reni on his cartoons or preparatory sketches and adapted his palette, especially until 1630, to the master's pearly tones. In the past, this circumstance often led to the works of Gessi and other pupils of Guido Reni being neglected in favour of the master. In 1615, for example, Reni commissioned Gessi and other fellow students to paint the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament in Ravenna Cathedral from his carton, a work that was completed in 1620. Also around 1620, Gessi painted the altarpiece with the Blessing Christ for the high altar of the church of S. Salvatore in Bologna, also based on Reni's models, in which the artist seems to follow the master's style perfectly.

From the 1630s onwards, however, the artist's palette gradually turned to bright colours, following the example of Tuscan painters such as Alessandro Allori and Jacopo Ligozzi, and became a new point of reference for the painter, who nevertheless remained in the master's footsteps.

The present Christ and Child is a work whose original destination is still unknown: because of its size, it could have been intended for a palace or a church altar. At an unspecified time, it was removed from its original location and, like many other paintings, ended up in the hands of private collectors.

The date of execution does not differ significantly from that of the above-mentioned Blessing Christ in the church of S. Salvatore in Bologna; here, too, the artist referred either to a carton by Guido Reni or to the famous study with the Christ's head today in the English Royal Collections (inv. no. 905283), from which Gessi often drew inspiration.

We are grateful to Daniele Benati, Bologna, who has confirmed the attribution of the present painting on the basis of a high-resolution digital photograph.

Estimate: 20.000 € - 30.000 €; Hammer: 20.000 €
