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Auction Fine Art

Date 17.11.2023, ca. 15:14

Preview 10.11.2023 - 10:00:00 bis
13.11.2023 - 18:00:00

VICENZINA, FRANCESCA
(‘Francesca Volo Smiller’)
Mailand 1657 - um 1700

Title: Still Life with Flower Basket, Grapes and Cherubs.
Technique: Oil on canvas.
Mounting: Relined.
Measurement: 102 x 150cm.
Frame: Framed.

Provenance:
Private ownership, Germany

A few decades ago the discovery of some works signed with "FRANCESCA VICENZINA" and their publication through Gianluca and Ulisse Bocchi were the starting point for further knowledge on a forgotten artist whose works have been attributed to her brother's, Giuseppe, hand on a regular basis.

The genealogical research on the family found that both artists have descended from a long lineage of still life painters that was led by their father Vincenzo Volò and that was continued by their numerous children Margherita, Francesca, Giovanna, Giulio, Giuseppe and Antonio.

Studies on family Volò have found evidence that Francesca was the original point of reference around which the family's painter's shop revolved after the father's death in Jahr 1671 for 30 years.

Before she became a very successful artist and was accepted at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome, Francesca had been a student of her father Vincenzo for five years, later she had been her sister Giovanna's colleague in the 1670s and then her brothers Giuseppe's, Giulio's, and Antonio's colleague and teacher in the 1680s. These periods corresponded to as many phases of her artist process that were all very productive. While her style had been essentially similar to her sister Giovanna's, Francesca stayed strongly connected with her younger brother Giuseppe's work in the late 1680s, which is why it often is difficult to differentiate their works in those years.

As it is visible in Francesca's painting, the painter seems to love the liquidity of the motif and the lightness of the execution more than her brother. The composition and the thoroughly thought through structure of the elements that have been ordered in a horizontal, vertical, and diagonal sequence provide the fitting theme for dating the painting to the late 1680s. At that point in time Francesca still kept the systems that she had codeveloped with her brother within the family, without blurring the artistic freedom, the formal and compositional nonchalance that characterized the last

decade of the century.

The present canvas that shows a basket of flowers, a tray with grapes, a "Sporta" with other fruits, celery, cauliflower and two puttos can without a doubt be seen as one of the most significant works of Francesca Vicenzina. As all Volòs, this artist prefers work of limited size that particularly accentuate her talent for short, especially refined brush strokes. We would like to draw attention to the presence of a "sporta", a dialectal variance for the word "bag", in the semi-darkness of the background, from which leaves, possibly chestnut leaves emerge, as well as both celery leaves at the side that are illuminated by a light ray - a scenic means that Francesca is also using in other paintings (while she varies the content of the "sporta"). A similar example in landscape format hangs in the rooms of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, another signed landscape painting entered the market a few days ago.

The authorship of Francesca Vicenzina for this painting is certain; this is substantiated by both the stylistic devices as well as the repetition of composition modules. It is more difficult to determine, which figure painter the artist asked for supplementing both puttos. It is necessary to search for possible candidates amongst the artists that were working in Milano during the last forty years and a collaboration with which can be found evidence for, amongst others Luigi Scaramuccia, Federico Macagni, Federico Bianchi, Giorgio Bonola and Andrea Pozzo.

We are grateful to Gianluca Bocchi, Casalmaggiore, for his help while cataloguing the painting, who suggested the attribution of the present painting on the basis of a high-resolution digital photograph.

Estimate: 5.000 € - 8.000 €
