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Auction **Fine Art**

Date 02.06.2021, ca. 14:09

Preview 27.05.2021 - 10:00:00 bis
30.05.2021 - 18:00:00

MICHIEL, PARRASIO
Venice ca. 1516 - 1578
attributed

Title: Triumph of Venus.
Technique: Oil on canvas.
Mounting: Relined.
Measurement: 146 x 106cm.
Frame/Pedestal: Framed.

Provenance:
Private ownership, Italy.

The depiction of beautiful human bodies has been a major concern of visual artists since antiquity. Throughout the centuries, there has been a canon of motifs in both secular and religious art that has been used to depict naked female bodies. The toilet of Venus or the adornment of Venus by the Graces belongs to this canon, as does the depiction of the Graces as a group of three.

In this painting, these motifs seem to be interwoven. Full-figured and filling the picture format vertically, an almost naked young woman leans against the front of a stone bench. A lush red velvet fabric with golden borders serves as her support. To her sides, but on the back of the bench, sit two other naked beauties. Of them, however, only their backs, slightly turned towards the main character, and their faces are visible. They appear as subordinate servants: Both have one arm raised and hold a wreath of flowers or laurel half over the head of the frontally depicted woman. In contrast to the secondary figures, she is adorned with a pearl necklace and bracelets and holds various pieces of jewellery and necklaces in both hands. A white, thin veil winds around her neck and shoulders and covers her pubic area.

The red velvet blanket and the selection of jewellery presented are reminiscent of Titian's "Venus in Front of the Mirror" which was common in various versions from the middle of the 16th century onwards. In one of these paintings, as in other depictions of the "Toilet of Venus" or the "Triumph of Venus", the motif of the wreath of honour with blossoms or laurel appears. Can the two wreaths be interpreted as attributes of earthly love (blossoms) and divine love (laurel)?

At the same time, the number of figures in the picture and their different views suggest an association with the group of the Three Graces. Particularly in Mannerism, this motif was used by painters in the competition of the arts to show

the three-dimensionality of the figure in the two-dimensionality of the painting. The attribute of the flower or laurel wreath also appears in Mannerist painting in the Three Graces. One interpretation of the present painting could also be that two of the Graces present their eldest sister Aglaia, who stands for glamour and splendour.

A regional and chronological classification of the painting can be made on the basis of stylistic features to northern Italy, more narrowly to Veneto and to the second half of the 16th century. The attribution to Parrasio Micheli is an obvious possibility, but other artists working in Veneto, such as the Flemish-born Ludovico Pozzoserrato, can also be considered as painters.

We are grateful to Daniele Benati, Bologna, and Vincenzo Mancini, Venice, for suggesting the attribution of the present painting on the basis of a high-resolution digital photograph, and for their help with the cataloguing.

Estimate: 40.000 € - 60.000 €
