

Lot 1128



Auction Fine Art

Date 19.11.2020, ca. 15:17

Preview 13.11.2020 - 10:00:00 bis
16.11.2020 - 18:00:00

FERRETTI, GIOVANNI DOMENICO
Florence 1692 - 1768

Title: Harlequin Expelled by his Mistress; Harlequin as Musical Master.

Technique: Oil on canvas.

Mounting: Relined.

Measurement: 97 x 76,5cm.

Frame/Pedestal: Framed.

Provenance:

Private ownership, Italy.

Two figures on an empty stage fill the frame of this painting: the masked harlequin in his typical colourful suit under a blue coat holds a fiddle and bow ready to play. His whole body is in motion because the front part of his left foot carries all his weight. He has lost the other leg. It is replaced by a wooden leg, which at this moment has no contact with the ground. Despite his handicap the harlequin is light-footed and enchants the young lady at his side. In a flowing pink silk dress and holding a transparent scarf, the dancing partner timidly sets off to dance the steps. Her gaze seeks the eyes of the man behind the mask.

Harlequin, who wins the woman's favour in this painting, is brusquely rejected by an adored woman in the other painting. With her hand the resolute lady pushes away the head of the man crouching on the ground. His whole posture radiates his failure. The verses he recited to his chosen one have obviously not softened her soul. The fact that a dog runs away from the image with a good piece of meat in its mouth does not make it any better for the ever-hungry Harlequin: the situation is beyond repair.

The Florentine painter Giovanni Domenico Ferretti, who created these paintings, had studied with Francesco Chiusuri in Imola and various masters in Bologna. From 1714 he was a busy painter for sacred frescoes and easel paintings in his hometown Florence. He also was a teacher at the academy of arts in Florence and 1731 one of its directors.

These two counterparts about success and failure of love (of a man) have to be seen in a larger context. In the 1940s, Ferretti created an extensive series of paintings with the protagonist Harlequin, the central figure of the "Commedia dell'Arte". Twenty paintings of this series are now in the collection of the "Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze". Harlequin's life is also placed here in a chronological order; for example, the painting "Harlequin as a Return from the War" shows how the leg amputation occurred.

The Sieneſe patrician family Sansedoni, who are known to have collected theatre motifs, commissioned the first of these series of paintings. The Sansedonis and the artist Ferretti, who had contact in Florence with the "Accademia del Vangelista", an amateur drama group which had emerged from a brotherhood, shared the interest in the stage. So it is easy to imagine that the commission from the Sansedoni family, whose Sieneſe Palazzo Ferretti also frescoed, was a welcome change from his traditional sacred themes for him.

And Ferretti had great success with his Harlequin series. Four of the paintings were distributed as prints and he received commissions to repeat the series and partly to vary it (a probably later version is now in The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida). The present paintings were possibly part of such a larger series. In their exemplary "success" and "failure" of love, however, they are complete as a pair.

Estimate: 30.000 € - 40.000 €
