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Auction **Fine Art**

Date 02.06.2021, ca. 14:25

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

FLEMISH/DUTCH CARAVAGGIST

1st half of the 17th century

Title: During Singing Lessons.

Technique: Oil on canvas.

Mounting: Relined.

Measurement: 87 x 70cm.

Frame/Pedestal: Framed.

Provenance:

Private ownership, Italy.

Michelangelo Merisi, better known as Caravaggio, is one of the great revolutionaries in art history. His completely new way of painterly treatment of strong light and shadow effects, his close-up, format-filling figures, which he profaned in their physiognomy and detail depiction, influenced all of European painting.

Artists who were at home north of the Alps became acquainted with the works of this new "baroque" view in Italy and were avant-garde trendsetters with their own paintings when they returned home. This was also the case with Hendrick ter Brugghen, Gerrit van Honthorst, Dirck van Barburen and Jan van Bijlert, who brought painterly innovations back to their home town of Utrecht from a stay in Rome around 1620 and who became style-setters as the "Utrecht Caravaggists". The high-quality painting presented here, which was probably painted in the second quarter of the 17th century, comes from this circle, but perhaps also from the Flemish region.

The painter has depicted an unequal couple singing: a young woman sits half-figured and almost full of format, her eyes fixed on the music book on her knees. Behind her on the left is an old, bearded man whose gaze, sharpened by a pincher, is supposedly fixed on the sheet music - or perhaps on the singer's radiant décolleté, which reflects the strong light? With his left hand, the old man leans on the woman's shoulder. It is a possessive gesture, but it could also be motivated by his bent-over posture. The wreath of oak leaves in the singer's hair and the turban on the old man's head also leave room for interpretation. Both singers have their right hands raised, as if to set the beat of the melody. It is noticeable that the young woman's hands are quite coarse and tanned and, like her darker face, contrast with the brightness of her décolleté.

The strong light falling on the figures from above left makes the silk fabrics of the woman's dress glow in the painting, which is otherwise coloured in restrained earth tones: The blue sleeves tied to the bodice, small red details on the wrists and neckline, and the lush green bow on the singer's belly, which echoes the colour of the oak leaves in her hair. The sheet music that the singer holds on her knees has not yet been analysed. Is there a recognisable melody or message hidden here, or possibly even a reference to the identity of the artist?

We are grateful to Jean-Pierre De Bruyn, Antwerp, Anne Delvingtder, Mons, and Fred G. Meijer, Amsterdam, for their help in cataloguing the present painting.

Estimate: 20.000 € - 25.000 €
