

## Lot 1044



**Auction**    **Fine Art**

**Date**        02.06.2021, ca. 15:28

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

PITTONI, GIOVANNI BATTISTA  
Venice 1687 - 1767  
and workshop

Title: The Holy Family.

Date: Ca. 1735.

Technique: Oil on canvas.

Mounting: Edges relined.

Measurement: 105 x 116cm.

Frame/Pedestal: Framed.

Literature:

Cf.: F. Zava Boccazzi: Giambattista Pittoni, Venezia 1979, p. 188, cat.no. 285, ill. 391;

J. Meyer zur Capellen: Giovanni Battista Pittonis Hl. Familie in westfälischem Privatbesitz. In: Weltkunst, 71, 2001, pp. 1850-1851.

Provenance:

Probably collection of Count Ferdinand von Plettenberg, Vienna;

Collection Ketteler Harkotten, Münster;

Since 2000 private ownership, Germany.

In 2001, the German art historian Jürg Meyer zur Capellen published the painting *The Holy Family with Angels* in a monographic article, attributing the work to the Venetian painter Giovanni Battista Pittoni (1687 in Venice - 1767 *ibid.*). In his text, the scholar attempts, among other things, to reconstruct the provenance of the painting. In 2000, the work was donated by the Ketteler zu Harkotten Collection in Münster to a private collection in Westphalia. How *The Holy Family* came into the possession of the Ketteler family, however, can only be deduced hypothetically. According to Meyer zu Capellen, the assumption that the Münster Domherr Nikolaus Hermann von Ketteler zu Harkotten commissioned the painting by Giovanni Battista Pittoni in 1750 together with the altarpiece of the Clemens Church, which contradicts the date of origin of *The Holy Family with Angels* that he dates to the 1730s. The entailed estate number on the back of the work, applied in dark colour, cannot have come from Ketteler zu Harkotten either, since, according to the art historian, he always had it applied in white.

In his article, Jürg Meyer zur Capellen proposes that the painting came into the collection of the Ketteler family through the marriage of the young widowed Countess Plettenberg. Count Ferdinand von Plettenberg (1690 Paderborn - 1737

Vienna) maintained good ties with the Ketteler family and was known in his time as an important patron and passionate collector. According to Meyer zu Kapellen, it is not unlikely that the countess also inherited Plettenberg's paintings upon Plettenberg's death and brought him into her second marriage with the hereditary lord of Ketteler zu Harkotten.

Franca Zavas Boccazzi's 1979 monograph on Giovanni Battista Pittoni cites another version of the painting *The Holy Family with Angels* (oil on canvas, 91 x 116 cm), executed entirely by Pittoni. Although the painting has been offered several times on the art market and its current location is unknown. Although only one black-and-white photograph can be used to view this execution (London, Witt Library - The Courtauld Institute of Art), some small but nevertheless significant differences can be identified that concretise the existence of at least two versions. A closer examination revealed, among other things, variations in the reproduction of drapery and shading.

Enrico Lucchese suspects that the present version of the painting is mainly a work from the artist's workshop, due to some less powerfully executed parts of the work. However, Giovanni Battista Pittoni's intervention in significant places, such as the faces of the figures, which are characterised by freshness and lightness, cannot be entirely ruled out.

In her monograph, Zava Boccazzi dates the first version of the painting around 1735, shortly before the *Madonna and Child between Saints Leonard and Francis of Paola*, which is still in the church of San Giorgio in Brescia. It is therefore highly probable that the present work was created in Pittoni's workshop only in the following years.

We are grateful to Enrico Lucchese, Trieste, for his help in cataloguing the present painting.

Estimate: 20.000 € - 25.000 €

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