

Lot 1057



Auction	Fine Art
Date	18.11.2021, ca. 10:43
Preview	12.11.2021 - 10:00:00 bis 15.11.2021 - 18:00:00

ROMAN SCHOOL
1st half of the 17th century
Title: Saint Cecilia and the Angel.
Technique: Oil on canvas.
Mounting: Relined.
Measurement: 74,5 x 57,5cm.
Frame/Pedestal: Framed.
Verso:
Remains of an old label.

Provenance:
Private ownership, Italy.

Among the saints most frequently reproduced and requested by important patrons, Saint Cecilia is undoubtedly the most popular portrait due to her close connection with music and theatre. Prominent works are by Raphael, Domenichino and Giovanni Lanfranco, for example. This present work combines the stylistic features of the Baroque through a refined play of light and precious pigments worthy of the young Poussin's colour combinations: The canvas is covered with garanza varnish to define the crimson and violet drapery, the decorations on the mantle are in Naples yellow and the dress in a precious lapis lazuli blue.

The painting is probably intended as a small altarpiece for a private chapel, as the attention to detail, the preciousness of the materials and the choice of the saint's pose suggest a definitive composition and a slightly elevated position. The putto offering the martyr's palm and the garland of flowers seems to be taken from one of the finest pieces of Poussin's painting, while the composition in a diagonal line with the swirl of clouds and lights falling from above is reminiscent of Lanfranco's Neapolitan compositions and Bernini's "scenic machines".

Yet everything is permeated by light: the flesh of the putto, made of a dense application of colour, the sparkle of the eyes, the transparency of the ruby in the centre of Cecilia's dress. The light refracted through the pearls is the thoughtful result of a very talented painter.

On one side, the light refracts in the folds of the saint's garment, while on the right, the brown tones highlight the "viola da gamba" and the organ. The latter is decorated with anthropomorphic figures starting from a human head and torso and ending with acanthus spirals and architectural volutes reminiscent of the rich furnishings of the Barberini house.

The right arm of Cecilia has a pentimento, which testifies to the search for the best position to give the saint both

space and movement. The white cloth wrapped around Cecilia's arm and chest, with its multitude of folds and chiaroscuro, is reminiscent of the cloths Simon Vouet depicted in the Roman era for his virgins adoring the Child. The attention to detail, the style and the depiction of light (immanently from above with a play of chiaroscuro in the clouds, like the praying Saint Charles Borromeo in front of Lanfranco's crucifix in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin, dated 1611) allow us to date the canvas between 1630 and the mid-1640s, allowing close connections and comparisons with the works of Lanfranco produced during his Neapolitan period and those of the young Poussin, who worked for the Barberini family: The flying angel in this painting - with its curly hair, lively eyes and rosy skin, is very close to the angels that Poussin included in his paintings. Here we can mention, for example, the flying or grounded cherubs in the painting of Acis and Galatea (c. 1627) in the National Gallery in Dublin, or in the cherubs of the Holy Family with John the Baptist, now in Budapest in the Szépművészeti Múzeum and dated c. 1627. The colours of this Saint Cecilia correspond to those favoured by Poussin, who often chose a brown ground tone so that the varnish and lapis lazuli blue could effectively accentuate the scene depicted.

Estimate: 10.000 € - 12.000 €
