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Auction **Fine Art**

Date 18.11.2021, ca. 11:15

Preview 12.11.2021 - 10:00:00 bis
15.11.2021 - 18:00:00

LAZZARI, SEBASTIANO
1730 Verona - 1795? Venice?

Title: Two Paintings: Trompe l'oeil with Globe, Fruit and Playing Cards; Trompe l'oeil with Fruit, Armillary Sphere and Key.

Date: 1783 and 1785.

Technique: Oil on canvas.

Mounting: Relined.

Measurement: Each 52 x 65cm.

Frame/Pedestal: Framed.

Exhibitions:

"Inganni ad arte. Meraviglie del trompe-l'oeil dall'antichità al contemporaneo" exhib. Fondazione Palazzo Florenz, Florence 2009-2010, p. 120-121.

Provenance:

Private ownership, Italy.

Not much is known about the life of Sebastiano Lazzari. Most of the information about him has been revealed in his own works. The dates of his life can be fuzzily deduced from his works dated between 1746 and 1791. Furthermore he describes himself as coming from Verona and calls himself painter, sculptor and architect; only his paintings could be attributed to him till today.

From the 1750s onwards Lazzari increasingly worked with trompe-l'oeils, the charming play with perspectives and habits of seeing. Paintings which imitated the surface of a board or a wall with illusionistic three-dimensional objects placed on it, deceptively real, were very popular in the 18th century. The aim was to create the impression that the pictorial space merges into the space of the viewer through a clever arrangement of the painted objects and their shadows.

Lazzari's speciality was to combine this illusionist technique with a conventional still life.

The present paintings are counterparts which are related to each other in terms of content and composition. The pictorial space of little depth is always filled by a tabletop that reaches directly to the lower edge of the image. The observer looks at one corner of the tabletop, the image section cuts the opposite edge. In both images the depth of the space is limited by a painted softwood wall. The light falls from the left onto the objects arranged on the tables and walls and in both images there is the same strong shadow of an edge on the left outside the images.

It is interesting that the two paintings are dated two years apart. The older work, painted in 1783, with the watermelon, pears and inkwell cut open, shows, beside these everyday things, an armillary sphere and a book, which according to the inscription is the first volume of a work by Galileo Galilei. On the "back wall" of the image hang keys and a magnifying glass with futorial on nails. A small songbird has settled on the appetizing watermelon.

The pendant is dated 1785. Next to the peaches, plums and a money stocking filled with coins, which are presented on a metal plate, there is a globe on the table, which is turned so that the viewer can see East Africa and the Indian Ocean. On the wooden wall hangs a map of Europe as well as a folding rule and a drawing pen. An inscription on the back wall says that without a ship or a steed, only with the eyes, one can overlook cities, provinces and empires and wander from one pole to another. So here the exploration and measurement of the earth is the theme while in the other painting the discovery of the sky and the universe is treated.

Sebastiano Lazzari has also combined the two paintings, which belong together, with a particularly refined detail: Colours in both paintings are dominated by beige and brown tones. Only the red of the melon and peaches adds a touch of colour. The back wall in the painting painted later is somewhat paler and greyer than in the earlier painting, where it appears more saturated and yellow. In this rich colouring Lazzari has "repaired" a painted defect in the paler wood, exactly the same size as the magnifying glass hanging on the wall in the older image.

The sophistication of the trompe-l'oeil painting on the back wall is brought to the fore by Lazzari by playing cards and a slip of paper, each of which seems to have been stuck under the real image frame. They are painted in such a way that the illusion is perfect that they belong to the space of the viewer.

In the image with the globe they are playing cards with a Queen of Clubs and a Three of Hearts, which stand for earthly love, like the coins in the stocking for earthly riches. In the image painted earlier, the emperor's tarot card is placed under the right frame border. In the game he symbolises among others the pioneer, researcher and visionary.

The ticket on the left edge of the image summarises the depictions in a moral aphorism. It translates as follows:

"Look at the whole universe. the lowly earth you see, how much of this earth do you think you have seen? Put an end to the blind splendour that is haughty."

Estimate: 50.000 € - 60.000 €
