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Auction	Fine Art
Date	15.05.2023, ca. 14:07
Preview	11.05.2023 - 10:00:00 bis 14.05.2023 - 16:00:00

BURGMKMAIR, HANS
Augsburg 1473 - 1531

Circle

Title: Portrait of Frederick III of Habsburg.
Date: 1st half of the 16th century.
Technique: Oil on softwood.
Measurement: 24 x 18cm.
Frame: Framed.

Certificate:
Francesco Rossi, 01.05.2016, copy available;
Bernd Konrad, 12.08.2018, copy available.

Provenance:
Private ownership, Italy.

The present painting belongs to a series of portraits of Frederick III of Habsburg (1415-1493), Holy Roman Emperor from 1452 onwards, executed in various materials.

As a source of inspiration for its execution, Francesco Rossi and Bernd Konrad point to a medal by the Florentine sculptor Bertoldo di Giovanni, executed in Florence in 1469, possibly commissioned by Lorenzo the Magnificent, which depicts an informal, private portrait of the emperor. Frederick III is actually depicted wearing a large felt hat rather than a crown: The man stands out against a blue-green background and is shown in profile with his torso to the left. On the basis of an infrared reflectography, which Konrad mentions in his certificate, it has been established that the painter made a preliminary drawing. The outline of the portrait seems to have been transferred onto wood from a drawing traced with small holes. The artist then thought about the composition, which he subsequently realised probably with the help of the "spolvero" technique.

Together with several paintings, the series of portraits also includes a number of medals and coins. In addition to the present version, a drawing from the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien (HNSA) should be mentioned. This portrait, folio 302 r., was taken from the 12-volume chronicle "Der Tir:olerAdler", which Matthias Burglechner (1573 - 1642) compiled until 1636.

Compared to the present painting, the portrait of the HHSA has been executed more precisely in the various details and forms as well as in the colouring. The skin is defined with very fine lines and the emperor's hat is modelled with brilliant highlights. There is also a blue cloth with a brocade design on the emperor's arm, which is missing from the medal.

The differences in style between the two portraits indicate that they were not created in the same period, but that several decades lie between them: The manner of depiction seems to indicate a painter who was active some time before the artist who drew the HHSA portrait, and who may have come from a different geographical area.

The infrared reflectography further shows that there was an inscription on the back, which is no longer recognisable today, attributing the painting to the Venetian Giovanni Bellini. The type of wood used for the panel, however, suggests that it is more likely a painter of German origin: Namely, it is softwood, which was commonly used in Germany and also in Italy along the Alps. In the 15th and early 16th centuries, many German-speaking artists were already active in Italy. Among them, the painter Hans Burgkmair (1473 -1531), who came from Augsburg and stayed in Italy between 1505 and 1507, is probably the most relevant painter for our case. Due to stylistic and formal similarities with paintings as well as drawings, this work was assigned to him or rather to his circle by Bernd Konrad. Francesco Rossi rather classifies the painting as an old copy of a now lost portrait inspired by Bertoldo but originating from the Germanic area.

We are grateful to Michaela Schedl, Tübingen, for confirming the attribution of the present painting on the basis of a high-resolution digital photograph, and for her kind support in its cataloguing.

Estimate: 17.000 € - 25.000 €; Hammer: 15.000 €
