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Auction	Fine Art
Date	17.11.2023, ca. 15:15
Preview	10.11.2023 - 10:00:00 bis 13.11.2023 - 18:00:00

BOONEN, ARNOLD
1669 Dordrecht - 1729 Amsterdam

Title: Ceres in Front of a Forest Landscape.
Technique: Oil on canvas.
Mounting: Relined.
Measurement: 49 x 40,5cm.
Notation: Signed lower right: A. Boonen.
Frame: Framed.

Provenance:

Presumably identifiable as a painting by Arnold Boonen that was auctioned in Amsterdam on 22 April 1749 ("Ceres in oen Landschap");
Kunsthhaus am Museum Carola van Ham, Cologne, 21 - 24 October 1981, lot 1182;
Private ownership, Germany.

Arnold Boonen was particularly distinguished in the genre of portraiture, either by portraying real people or composing allegories. After studying in Holland with well-known painters such as Godfried Schalcken, he moved to Germany for a few years from 1694 to 1695. Boonen was active here in several cities - Frankfurt am Main, Mainz and Darmstadt - and quickly made a name for himself as a portrait painter: several famous personalities, such as Fürstbischof Lothar Franz von Schönborn and Landgraf von Hessen-Darmstadt Ernst Ludwig, were immortalised by him.

From 1696 he resided in Amsterdam, where he continued his successful career as a portrait painter of famous personalities: the Russian Tsar Peter I the Great and Prince William IV of Orange posed for him. An excellent colourist and skilful illustrator, Boonen quickly established a prominent place for himself in Dutch painting in the first half of the 18th century.

The present painting shows an idealised young woman holding a harvest sickle in her left hand and a bundle of wheat ears on her arm; a crown of wheat ears also adorns her lovely neck. We can therefore identify the figure as Ceres, for the Romans the maternal goddess of the earth and fertility, patron goddess of the harvest, but also goddess of childbirth. The painting corresponds to the traditional iconography of the goddess, who was usually depicted as a stern and majestic, but at the same time beautiful and kind matron, with a crown of ears of corn on her head, a torch in one hand and a basket full of grain and fruit in the other.

The elegance of the figure, the lush drapery and the overall composition are reminiscent of the works of the master

Godfried Schalcken, so the painting may have been created in the artist's youth. This is not the only depiction of deities or secular allegorical figures by Boonen, by whom a Diana is also known. Not only the composition as a whole, but also the dimensions of this painting resemble those of Ceres. For this reason, it is tempting to think that the two paintings are somehow connected, perhaps a joint commission by a scholarly patron.

We are grateful to Nadja Garthoff, RKD The Hague, for confirming the attribution of the present painting on the basis of a high-resolution digital photograph. In her letter, Garthoff additionally refers to old records of Hofstede de Groot, which presumably describe this painting in old publications and auctions from 1749 and 1752.

Estimate: 7.000 € - 10.000 €; Hammer: 6.000 €

