

Lot 1052

**Auction** Fine Art**Date** 17.05.2024, ca. 14:39**Preview** 10.05.2024 - 10:00:00 bis
13.05.2024 - 18:00:00LANFRANCO, GIOVANNI
1582 Parma - 1647 RomeTitle: Study to Male Hands.
Technique: Black pen on paper.
Mounting: Mounted.
Measurement: 35 x 25,5cm.
Frame: Framed.Provenance:
Collection Erich Schleier, Berlin.

The present work by Giovanni Lanfranco is the most personal sheet from Erich Schleier's estate. The connection between him and the artist is indissoluble and enduring: Lanfranco was the artist to whom Schleier dedicated his entire life from the time of his master's thesis. Countless exhibition catalogues, articles, scientific essays, lectures, etc. were dedicated to this painter, who worked between Parma, Rome and Naples. Lanfranco became a kind of alter ego of Erich Schleier, whose artistic and biographical events over the course of Schleier's career were precisely and rigorously reconstructed.

This study drawing of three hands is a typical example of Lanfranco's mature graphic style, which is particularly shared in his detailed studies. Today, the series of comparable works is distributed among the drawing cabinets of the Florentine Uffizi, the Museo Capodimonte in Naples, the Royal Library in Windsor Castle, the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica in Rome and the Kunstmuseum in Düsseldorf (see E. Schleier, *Disegni di Giovanni Lanfranco*, Florence 1983, pp. 7-12).

The drawing is an exact study of the hands of the apostle Paul, which were painted together with the other apostles and Carthusian saints on the sides of the windows of the nave of the Carthusian monastery of St Martin in Naples in 1637. That year, Don Isidoro de Alegria, the Father Procurator of the Order, commissioned Lanfranco to paint various spotlights and figures on the vault of the nave, the choir and the entrance walls of the Charterhouse. The programme culminated in the Resurrection of Christ and kept the painter busy until early 1639. The numerous preparatory drawings document the difficulty and commitment he put into this work. Although it caused the artist many problems, today it is rightly regarded as his most successful project in Naples, together with the paintings on the dome of the

Gesù Nuovo (1634-1635) and the frescoes on the Holy Apostles (1638-1646).

The lower part of the sheet shares the two preliminary studies of the right hand of St Paul holding the book. The upper part of the sheet shows the study of a left hand falling downwards while the arm rests on the sword. In its robust, energetic and painterly style, the sheet represents a characteristic example of the artist's Neapolitan period, which is "characterised by a neglect of the linear definition of the contours of forms that are classically meant (...) and can be recognised as the expression of a completely new and revolutionary pictorialism", to quote the extremely precise analysis provided for this study by Erich Schleier (op. cit. 1983, p. 13) in his fundamental catalogue of Lanfranco's drawings in the Uffizi.

We are grateful to Simonetta Proserpi Valenti, Rome, for confirming the attribution of the present drawing on the basis of a high-resolution digital photograph and for her help cataloguing it.

Estimate: 3.000 € - 6.000 €; Hammer: 4.300 €

