Architecture, After Giambologna



25 000 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Bronze

Height : 36 cm

Description

Architecture, after Giambologna.Low Countries.Late 17th century.h. 36 cm (14,1/4 in).The first mention of Giambologna's Architecture appears in 1611 in the inventory of Markus Zäch's collection in Augsburg, where it is described as una donna a sedere che rappresenta l'architettura ("a seated woman representing architecture"). This is undoubtedly the allegory of Architecture, sometimes titled Geometry, as it already appears in The Cabinet of Cornelis van der Geest, painted in 1628 by Willem van Haecht, and later in the Gallery of Girardon engraved by René Charpentier in the early 18th century: seated, wearing a diadem, holding a compass and square in her right hand, and an oblong tablet in her left. "There is a sharp contrast, notes Weihrauch, between the instruments, with their

Dealer

Galerie Lamy Chabolle
Decorative art of the 18th and 19th centuries
Tel : 0142606671
Mobile : 06 11 68 53 90

14 rue de Beaune
Paris 75007

stiff, geometrical shapes, and the softly undulating surfaces and fluid lines of her nude, symmetrical body".Giambologna himself practiced as an architect and seemed to value that status. He is titled Statuarius et Architectus in a 1589 portrait engraved by Gijsbrecht van Veen, and is shown with the tools of an architect in another portrait attributed to Hans von Aachen, as well as in the frescoes by Federico Zuccaro painted beneath the dome of Santa Maria del Fiore. Despite this tendency to place his status as architect on equal footing with that of sculptor, it remains unclear which major architectural projects can truly be attributed to him, apart from the Salviati Chapel in the Church of San Marco in Florence.It is likely that Giambologna's Allegory was inspired by the Allegory of Architecture completed by Bandini based on Vasari's drawings in 1568 for Michelangelo's tomb at Santa Croce. Whether Giambologna's model was originally conceived as a monumental marble or a small bronze remains unanswered. The marble version of Architecture now in the Bargello--mentioned in the Boboli Gardens in 1789 and first attributed to Giambologna by Supino in 1898--was long the subject of controversy. Weihrauch deemed the work too weak in both technique and composition to be by the master, suggesting instead that it was the work of one of his assistants. Keutner, dating the marble to the early 1570s, even named Franqueville as a plausible candidate. Radcliffe, who initially supported the traditional view that the marble preceded the bronze, eventually sided with Weihrauch, even proposing that it was a mechanically enlarged copy of the bronze.The only signed version of Architecture, and the only one unanimously recognized as autograph, is the bronze in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Technical analyses conducted by Glinsman and later Bewer have shown that it is a leaded tin bronze with trace amounts of zinc, antimony, nickel, silver and iron, cast in a single piece using the indirect lost wax process. According to Bewer, the patina was altered long after the piece

left Giambologna's workshop.The Boston bronze serves as the prototype for the first of two known groups of casts. It is distinguished by specific features: a plumb line hanging from the figure's neck, which explains the taut shape of the necklace, and a crossbar completing the square held by the allegorical figure. The earliest representations of Architecture--those by Willem van Haecht and René Charpentier mentioned above--belong to this group. Both the alloy composition of the autograph Boston bronze and the caption in Girardon's gallery, which refers to a bronze figure by Giambologna repaired by Susini, confirm that this first group is strictly Italian and Florentine.The bronze examined here belongs to a second group of casts, which differs from the first in two details: the plumb line and the square's crossbar are missing. This type of Architecture first appears in a still life by Edwaert Collier dated ca. 1665. Two examples related to it, held in public collections--the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Toledo Museum of Art--have been dated by Avery and Schlegel to the late 17th or early 18th century.The bronze studied here shares with the Metropolitan and Toledo bronzes several stylistic and technical characteristics that securely place it within the second group. All three examples feature the same face, slightly less idealized than those of the first group, a similar reddish-brown patina, as well as a casting seam on the left arm, a peg at the left shoulder, and a casting flaw at the inner elbow. The figure and pedestal were cast as a single unit, while the base was cast separately. The left arm, likely cast solid and separately--as indicated by the seam--introduces slight variations in the tilt of the tablet. In both the Toledo bronze and the one studied here, the tablet is attached at the back with a screw to correct an angle between the tablet and the base that might otherwise be too obtuse and compromise the balance of the whole.The figure, except for the left arm, was cast using the indirect lost-wax method, which explains the identical form, assembly, and casting

defects found in this example and those from the Metropolitan and Toledo. The interior of the bronze retains parts of the armature used to support the wax and core before casting. Technically speaking, this is not a bronze per se but a brass alloy--mainly composed of copper and zinc with low traces of tin and lead--further supporting a northern origin, as already suggested by the presence of a second-group bronze in Edwaert Collier's still life. Similar alloys have been found in several works by northern bronze artists, especially in those by Willem Danielsz. van Tetrode, Hendrick de Keyser, and the circle of Arent van Bolten. Hackenbroch and Draper, in their entries for the Architecture in the Metropolitan's and Untermyer Collection's respective catalogues, also suggest a northern or possibly French origin, though based on different grounds. Inventories published by Bredius confirm the presence of Italian plaster models -- as early as the second quarter of the 17th century, particularly those by Giambologna or Michelangelo -- in the workshops of certain founders, goldsmiths, and sculptors in the Low Countries.SourcesWilhelm von Bode, "Gian Bologna und seine Thätigkeit als Bildner von Kleinbronzen", in Kunst und Künstler. Illustrierte Monatsschrift für bildende Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, Berlin, 1911; Edwin Hipkiss, "Architecture by Giambologna", in Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, vol. 38, no. 227, June 1940; Elisabeth Dhanens, Jean Boulogne, Brussels, 1956; Hans Weihrauch, "Giovanni Bologna (1529-1608): 'Die Architektur'", in Die Kunst und das Schöne Heim, May 1958; Franz Rademacher, Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn. Verzeichnis der Gemälde, Cologne, 1959; Yvonne Hackenbroch, Bronzes, Other Metalwork and Sculpture in the Irwin Untermyer Collection, London, 1962; Hans Weihrauch, Europäische Bronzestatuetten. 15.-18. Jahrhundert, Brunswick, 1967; Bavarian National Museum Guide 1. Bronze Sculpture. Acquisitions from 1956-1973. Hans R. Weihrauch zum 65.

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