



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Pair Of Battle Scenes



8 000 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 74

Height : 59

Description

Workshop of Francesco Monti, known as Brescianino (Brescia, 1646 - Piacenza, 1703) Pair of battle scenes(2) Oil on canvas, cm 59.5 x 74.5 cm With frame, 75 x 88 cm The pair of canvases in question depicts a clash between knights with firearms. The brilliant armor of the fighters stands out on a sky full of clouds, facing the profile of a city and a suggestive natural landscape. The scene is filmed in the foreground, according to a typical ploy of the battles painted in Northern Italy in the second half of the seventeenth century, and, in particular by Francesco Monti and the members of his school, in order to make the spectator feel like a direct witness of the scene which he is witnessing. This turns out to be one of the key characteristics of Brescianino's production, to which are added a great chromatic

Dealer

Ars Antiqua srl

Antiquaire généraliste

Tel : +39 02 29529057

Via C. Pisacane, 55 - 57

Milano 20129

liveliness, the play of various perspectives and careful stage direction. A peculiarity of the painter and the members of his circle is the representation of the fight in the foreground, described with chromatic liveliness and careful scenic direction. The episode of the white horse that half fell to the ground with the unhorsed rider, as well as the clash of two characters in the centre, are elements that recur in Brescianino's repertoire, as can be seen in works such as the Battle Scene of the Stuard Art Gallery or the Battle of Palazzo Rivella. Francesco Monti, better known as Il Brescianino or Il Brescianino delle Battaglia, was born in Brescia in 1646.

Pellegrino Antonio Orlandi (1704), who was his first biographer, informs that he had the Lucca painter Pietro Ricchi as his teacher. All the following literature accepted the news, mostly assuming that the pupil took place during Ricchi's Venetian stay, placed in the third quarter of the 17th century. The total absence of data on Monti's youth activity, however, makes it almost impossible to assess the influence of Ricchi's style in his training and, on the other hand, it is not easy to detect derivations from the master in subsequent production. However, Monti was also a pupil of Jacques Courtois known as the Burgundian, according to Orlandi himself and a letter sent to Monti by his friend Carlo Giuseppe Fontana in 1694, reported in the monograph dedicated to the artist of Brescian origins by Arisi (1975, p. 34). The Burgundian magisterium, although its chronological and geographical circumstances are unknown, must have had a decisive role in Monti's improvement as a battle painter. The difficulties of outlining a certain catalogue of his work, however, in the absence of a sufficient quantity of documented paintings, are also reflected in the definition of this artistic relationship: symbolic of the influence of Borgognone on Brescianino is the diptych of Battaglia dell'accademia dei Concordi in Rovigo, first attributed to the artist originally from Brescia in 1981 by Romagnolo. During the formative

phase, the artist carried out numerous trips that took him to various locations on the Peninsula: particularly significant was the one to Naples, where he had the opportunity to observe firsthand the work of Salvator Rosa, which strongly influenced his entire production pictorial.

Fundamental works to define and understand the stylistic characteristics underlying Brescianino's production are the six paintings of the Rocca dei Principi Lupo di Sorgara, the Battle of the Sanvitale Museum of Fontanellato and the Zuffa between knights of the Farnese palace in Piacenza. Having reached full artistic maturity, Brescianino permanently entered the service of the Farnese family in 1681: there are numerous works, mainly of war subjects, created by the artist for the centers of Parma and Piacenza in the last twenty years of the seventeenth century.

Particularly appreciated at the Farnese court, the artist was able to build a prolific workshop in Parma, where figures such as Giovanni Canti, Ilario Spolverini, Angiolo Everardi, known as the Fiamminghino, and Lorenzo Comendich were trained. Monti's paintings are characterized by large spaces «which are lost among the smoke and dust», by the tangle of armed men in the foreground with unhorsed knights and horses that rear up in the last moment of life. In addition to the battles, which certainly constitute the largest and most interesting segment of his production, the painter executed paintings with religious and marine themes in which we see the influence of Pieter Mulier, known as Il Tempesta, with whom he had a relationship of profound friendship.

After having created an active and established workshop, the artist died, probably in Piacenza, in 1703 (Sestieri, 1999, p. 206). The analogies with Brescianino's style lead us to attribute the pair of paintings to a direct member of his school, among which we remember Giuseppe Nicola Domenico Monti, "who followed his father's treads" (Orlandi, 1661) and Giovanni Canti, who was probably the author of Joshua stopping the sun, previously assigned to his master (Arisi 1975, n.

26).