



PROANTIC  
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

## Portrait Of Ginevra Cantofoli



4 600 EUR

Period : 17th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : 39

Height : 48

### Description

17th century Bolognese school  
Portrait of Ginevra Cantofoli  
Oil on canvas, 48 x 39.5 cm  
With frame, 57 x 50 cm  
This painting depicts a woman painter caught in the midst of her creative activity. In fact, she turns her gaze towards the viewer, as if she had been suddenly interrupted, while holding the palette and brushes, tools of the trade, in her hands, and with an easel behind her on which her latest work rests: a half-length portrait of a young man who plays with the concept of a painting within a painting, creating a double illusion in the eyes of those who observe the portrait. Both this solution and the idea of representing oneself with objects and tools linked to one's artistic work in one's hand were often used by female painters, who wanted in this way to demonstrate their cultural, professional and cultural independence

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with respect to a male world, in which it was difficult to assert oneself due to centuries-old habits and stereotypes that also reverberated in the artistic universe. The fame that some women achieved in the field of painting was recognized both by their contemporaries and in the following centuries, reaching up to today; many of these decided to represent themselves or had themselves portrayed during the development of their art, as did for example great artists such as Lavinia Fontana, Sofonisba Anguissola, Elisabetta Sirani, Artemisia Gentileschi, Rosalba Carriera and Violante Series Cerotti. Often the portrait also took on a metaphorical meaning through some symbolic references that allowed the painter to be interpreted also as a possible allegory of painting, although no allegorical objects or references are found in this work. Focusing on the identity of the subject, the features, clothing and hairstyle, blocked by cloths tight around the head, recall those of a very important seventeenth-century Bolognese painter and her female subjects: Ginevra Cantofoli (1608-1672), pupil of Elisabetta Sirani and active in her hometown throughout her life. From a stylistic point of view, the work takes place in the same century as Cantofoli's activity, of which it also takes up the shades, the soft chiaroscuro, the clothing, the dark background and the diaphanous light that illuminates the woman's face. The author therefore follows in the stylistic footsteps of the depicted woman, perhaps out of coherence towards the subject represented or perhaps out of proximity in artistic training, perhaps a colleague, a student or an admirer of Cantofoli. This result recalls the work in which Bernardino Campi portrays Sofonisba Anguissola, created by the Cremonese painter who was a pupil of Bernardino himself, in a game of mutual representations that could make us suspect that the man depicted on the canvas placed on the easel could be the same author of the canvas, who creates the portrait of the artist in a mirror.