



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Portrait Of The Greek Philosopher Diogenes, Abraham Brueghel (antwerp 1631 - Naples 1690)



15 800 EUR

Signature : Abraham Brueghel (Anvers 1631 - Naples 1690)
atelier

Period : 17th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Oil painting

Width : encadré 118 cm.

Height : encadré 153 cm.

Description

Abraham Brueghel (Antwerp 1631 - Naples 1690) workshop Portrait of the Greek philosopher Diogenes with a still life of fruit and flowers Oil on canvas 130 x 94 cm. - Framed 153 x 118 cm. Reference bibliography: Alberto Cottino, Abraham Brueghel 1631-1697. A master of still life between Antwerp, Rome and Naples, Etgraphiae, Rome 2022 [FULL DETAILS OF THE PAINTING \(CLICK HERE\)](#) The painting in question, of exceptional quality and artistic merit, depicts an elderly man with a thick grey beard, portrayed in three-quarter profile with an intense and focused gaze directed towards the left. With his muscular, outstretched arms, he is reaching for the handle of a large woven basket brimming with grapes, surrounded by a sumptuous and festive arrangement of fruit flanked by floral and

Dealer

Antichità Castelbarco

Old master paintings

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architectural elements. It is a portrait of the Greek philosopher Diogenes of Sinope (known as the Cynic), as it perfectly mirrors the ancient portraits and marble busts dedicated to the great thinker that have come down to us: classical iconography depicts him precisely as a man with an unkempt beard, a pronounced bald patch, unclothed and with a vigorous physique, though marked by age. Even the setting in which he is placed perfectly reflects his philosophical thought, which preached self-sufficiency and a return to the state of nature, whilst despising material possessions and social conventions: for these reasons, his figure in the painting is half-naked and immersed directly amongst the fruits of the earth, evoking the philosopher's austere way of life. From the mid-17th century onwards, the fashion for these cultured depictions spread rapidly throughout Italy, but particularly in Rome, where the figures portrayed were set against backdrops adorned with flowers or fruit, making these works highly decorative and much appreciated by the bourgeois patrons of the time. The work is indeed distinguished by its spectacular setting, from which emerge, in all their opulence, various types of fruit: from the gigantic, split dark watermelon, revealing its red flesh and seeds, to the striped melon, the figs split open to reveal their red centres, the purplish plums and velvety peaches, right through to the two large, ripe, split pomegranates resting near a monumental decorated vase, from which lush, deep-pink roses cascade. This is a painting of immediate beauty, combining remarkable pictorial finesse with a compositional structure capable of satisfying even the most discerning eye: a strong chiaroscuro contrast illuminates the man's skin and the vibrant colours of the fruit, creating a sense of abundance typical of the Baroque. The style of the work, with its textured application of paint featuring soft brushstrokes and brilliant colouring, combines the typical naturalism of Northern origin with the classicism characteristic of the Roman art scene of the second half of the seventeenth century, to

which the authorship can readily be attributed. In the volume edited by Prof. Alberto Cottino, we find a work similar to ours (which differs only in minor details), generically titled 'Still Life with Fruit, Architectural Fragment and Old Man' and attributed to Abraham Brueghel (Antwerp 1631 - Naples 1697) in collaboration with Guillaume Cortese (formerly Rome, Megna Collection, fig. 1). The volume also features another version (oil on canvas, 147 x 117 cm) which was sold at the Cambi auction in Genoa (13 December 2019, lot 68), again attributed to the collaboration between Abraham Brueghel and Cortese (fig. 2 - <https://www.cambiaste.com/it/asta-0377/abraham-brueghel-anversa-1631-1697-e-guillaume-18799> 4). Collaborations such as this, between painters specialising in still lifes and other specialists in figure painting, were very common in seventeenth-century Rome, and Brueghel benefited from them frequently in his own work: suffice it here to mention Maratti, Baciccio, Brandi, and indeed Guillaume Courtois, known as Guglielmo Cortese (Saint Hippolyte, 1628 - Rome, 1679), with whom he established a fruitful and long-lasting partnership, yielding true masterpieces of Roman Baroque painting. It was also customary in the workshops of seventeenth-century painters to repeat the subjects of their most successful paintings several times over, and Brueghel is certainly no exception. In this case, given the quality of the painting, the authorship must unquestionably be attributed to a skilled pupil of the prolific 'Brueghel workshop', whilst we cannot entirely rule out Brueghel's own involvement or, at the very least, his direct supervision. The theme of still lifes featuring flowers and fruit with male figures is very well represented in Abraham Brueghel's catalogue; in particular, we may mention, by way of comparison, a composition with a similar subject but in a horizontal format, 'Still Life with Fruit and a Bearded Man' (Bologna, private collection), in which Guglielmo Cortese is again credited as the co-author of the

male figure. And also the painting 'Allegory of Autumn' (Private collection). These two works are published in the aforementioned volume by Cottino dedicated to Abraham Brueghel, on pages 82 and 104 respectively.

ADDITIONAL

INFORMATION: The painting is set in a lovely antique frame and comes with a certificate of authenticity and a descriptive iconographic sheet. We arrange and organise the transport of purchased works, both within Italy and abroad, using professional, insured carriers. Should you wish to view this or other works in person, we would be delighted to welcome you to our new gallery in Riva del Garda, at Viale Giuseppe Canella 18. We look forward to seeing you! Please contact us for any further information or to arrange a visit; we'll be happy to assist you. Follow us

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