

## Galerie Canesso

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## PRESS RELEASE

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# The Art of Collecting

We have chosen to present three pictures, all painted on the same support, wood panel. They originate from three legendary cities of the Italian peninsula, Florence, Venice and Rome. Each place had a special appeal for British collectors in the eighteenth century, during the period of the Grand Tour, and then for the American and the French, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Two of our works were created during the Renaissance, which evolved in Tuscany in the 14th century, expressing a refined, codified form of art, rich in symbols and intended for the elite. In Florence, the Medici succeeded in fostering the talent of artists like Botticelli (1445-1510), enriching their collections, which later provided the jewels in the crown of the Uffizi Gallery, which remains Italy's most visited museum. The Renaissance saw scholars rediscovering Classical texts, and in particular the writings of the Greek philosopher Plato, and humanist philosophy placed mankind at the centre of the universe; it is therefore an optimistic view of the world, based on knowledge.



## Florence



Lorenzo di Giovanni di Nofri, *The Virgin Adoring the Child*,  
tempera on wood panel, 41 3/8 x 23 1/4 in (105 x 59 cm)  
© Galerie Canesso Paris

Our *Virgin and Child* was painted by a 15th-century Florentine artist, the Maestro of San Miniato, whose identity has recently been rediscovered: he was Lorenzo di Giovanni di Nofri, a pupil of Neri di Bicci (1419-1492), and is documented between 1465 and 1512. This type of object, known as a *colmo da camera*, was much favoured in patrician and stately homes in Florence, where it had both a decorative and private devotional function. The work dates to about 1480, during the opulent years of the Tuscan capital under Lorenzo de' Medici, "the Magnificent".



## Venice



Bernardino Licinio, *Young Lady and her Suitor*,  
oil on wood panel, 32 x 45 in (81.3 x 114.3 cm) © Galerie Canesso Paris

Bernardino Licinio (c. 1490-c. 1550) takes us to the beginning of the sixteenth century – once again in the Renaissance era, but now in Venice, around 1520. This very rare composition belonged to Queen Caroline Murat (1782-1839), sister of Napoleon and wife of the King of Naples Joachim Murat. Subsequently the picture formed part of the prestigious Parisian gallery-museum of James-Alexandre, Comte de Pourtalès-Gorgier (1776-1855), where it was displayed with paintings such as Antonello da Messina's *Portrait of a Condottiere*, now in the Louvre.

Between 1515 and 1525, like his contemporaries Titian and Palma Vecchio, and running parallel to the production of religious subjects, Licinio painted portraits, sometimes idealized, as in this allegory of marriage. The placement of the figures was painstakingly prepared, as is clear from the beautiful underdrawing, which reveals a number of revisions; and the full, sculptural forms are typical of the artist's style.

## Rome



Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of a Lady*,  
oil on wood panel (box cover),  
diameter 5 ½ in (14 cm); 6 ¾ in (17 cm) including border, which serves as a frame  
© Galerie Canesso Paris

One side of this precious work, painted on a walnut support, bears a delicate portrait of a lady, while the other has mouldings that suggest its function as the lid of a cylindrical box, perhaps a small jewellery chest. A native of Bologna, Lavinia Fontana was one of the rare women painters, and one of the first, in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. She was the daughter of the Mannerist artist Prospero Fontana (1512-1597), in whose workshop she trained, and was outstanding in this miniature format.

Our tondo should be dated to between 1604 and 1614 and is therefore a late work. The artist spent all her career in Bologna, except for the last decade, when she was in Rome and much sought-after for her talents as portraitist by the aristocracy. Her reputation in this area had now extended beyond the borders of her native city.

## Galerie Canesso Paris: a brief biography

Driven by his passion for Italian art from Renaissance to Baroque, Maurizio Canesso has dedicated the last thirty years of his career to discovering and rediscovering masterpieces as well as giving them a new life, before they are offered to international clients, both private and public. He founded his Paris gallery in 1994 in the 9th arrondissement, in the heart of the Hôtel Drouot neighbourhood.

The Canesso gallery organizes ambitious exhibitions, often in collaboration with other institutions, and accompanied by their own publications. In 2010, the exhibition on the Master of the Blue Jeans was one of the gallery's most original contributions, among others.

The gallery seeks to stand by collectors on an exclusive, long-term basis, offering paintings that are appreciated internationally. Its close collaboration with art historians and museum curators attests to success with public institutions throughout the world (The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and in France, the Musée du Louvre, among others).

