CARLO MANIERI

(TARANTO ? DOCUMENTÉ À ROME DE 1662 À 1700)

Still Life with a Basket of Grapes, Pomegranates, Quinces and Pears, with a Fig Branch and a Cask of Grapes

Oil on canvas, 57 1/16 × 76 3/4 in (145 × 195 cm).



PROVENANCE

Milan, Finarte sale, 29 October 1964, lot 52 (as Michelangelo del Campidoglio); private collection.

LITERATURE

- Laura Laureati and Ludovica Trezzani, “La natura morta postcaravaggesca a Roma”, in *La natura morta in Italia*, Milan, 1989, vol. II, p. 741, fig. 876, p. 743 (as “Roman artist”);
- Gianluca Bocchi and Ulisse Bocchi, “Carlo Manieri”, in *Pittori di natura morta a Roma. Artisti italiani 1630-1730*, Verona, 2005, pp. 535, 537, fig. CM.7;
- Gianluca Bocchi and Ulisse Bocchi, "Carlo Manieri, pittore a Roma nella seconda metà del Seicento : nuove acquisizioni e definitive conferme", in *Parma per l’Arte*, 2016, p. 274, fig. 16.

A biographical void, and the still unknown dates of birth and death of Carlo Manieri, have contributed to his oblivion over the past centuries, although his membership of the *Virtuosi del Pantheon* academy is documented between 1662 and 1675. Archival documents attest to our artist’s presence in the inventories of important Roman collections such as the Colonna, Pamphilj, Valenti Gonzaga, and Chigi.

It was not until 2005 that an initial body of work was established, based on monogrammed or signed compositions; earlier that, Eduard A. Safarik had been the first to identify the monogram “CMF” as “Carlo Manieri Fecit” on two paintings representing palace interiors with curtains, carpets and armour, with a provenance from Palazzo Pamphilj in Rome.[1]

The principal motif of our composition resembles that of two other paintings, a connection already made by Laura Laureati and Ludovica Trezzani, who had proposed a Roman context because of the close resemblance to the work of Michele Pace and Michelangelo Cerquozzi. One of those two pictures has a similar architectural background, with trophies of armour, while the other retains only a part of the central motif.

The gigantic appearance of the various pieces of fruit enhances their individual qualities as well as accentuating the Baroque effect of this bountiful harvest that stretches from top to bottom. The large wicker basket and wooden cask can be found in other compositions by the artist, and the fruit, described with rich pigment and colour – blues, red and quince-yellow – stands out all the more against the dark, naturalistic background. This approach favours contrasts of light and shade, with the greens of the foliage marking intermediate passages between the prominent expressions of nature and the darkness behind.

Note:
1-Eduard A. Safarik, *Fasto romano: dipinti, sculture, arredi dai palazzi di Roma* , exhibition catalogue, Rome, Palazzo Sacchetti, 1991, p. 25, figs. 1 and 2.