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Seguace di Jan Brueghel II

*Allegoria della Vista: Venere e Amore in uno studiolo, veduta di  
Anversa sullo sfondo*  
Olio su tavola cm 56x89  
In cornice (difetti)

Provenienza

Antique Gemalde Salon Joseph Kuba venduto a Mons. Cesare V.  
Adda, Karlsbad, 18/08/1935.

Vendita dell'Eredità Achille D'Adda ad opera di Rodolfo  
Manfredini a Artaki Gurjian, Alessandria d'Egitto, 12/12/1951.  
Collezione privata

Expertise

Gustav Gluck, Vienna 1934 (attribuito a Jan Brueghel il Giovane)  
Klaus Ertz, Lingen 24 febbraio 2016 (attribuito a Frans Wouters)  
€ 12.000/14.000

The present painting, probably one of a series of five depicting the senses – see also the following lot - is a version of Jan Brueghel II's Allegory of Sight, now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, of which two further versions are known, one formerly in the Coppee collection, Brussels, the other was with Koetser in London, in 1972. See K. Ertz, *Jan Brueghel der Jüngere: Die Gemälde mit kritischen Oeuvrekatalog*, 1984, cat.no. 183, with Ill. As in the Philadelphia painting, the present composition depicts the goddess of Venus accompanied by Amor as a personification of Sight holding a mirror standing in a collector's cabinet. The room is similarly arranged, with a gallery of sculpture in the background on the left and a double arched window looking out on the river Schelde and the city of Antwerp on the right.

Yet, numerous changes occur between the painting in Philadelphia and the present composition. Most notably is the different selection of paintings and sculpture against the back wall. Here, in the lower section paintings of a wooded landscape, a night scene and of boors playing the violin in the style of Adriaen Brouwer are displayed. On the shelf above are sculptures of Faith, Hope and Love, a sculpture of Amor resting on his bow and on the right a sculpture of Cain slaying Abel. On the top shelf are among others terrestrial and a celestial globes. On the central table is a cast of Giambologna's sculpture of the Abduction of a Sabine woman and an astrolabe. On the floor are paintings of a landscape, Vertumnus and Pomona, Venus and Adonis and a still life in the style of Frans Sijnders. In the gallery of sculpture is a cast of the Torso Belvedere.

The figure of Venus as personification of sight holding a mirror derives from series of engravings of the senses, such as the one by Cornelis Cort after Frans Floris, Abraham de Bruyn and Raphael de Sadeler after Maerten de Vos. In all these series Sight is presented holding a mirror.

The pictorial genre of the collector's cabinet, such as seen here, originated in Antwerp at the beginning of the seventeenth century and became rapidly a commercial success. As for the ebonized collector's cabinet with drawers on a stand, in which collections of *naturalia* were kept and which served as center pieces in the humanist household, the success of the painted collector's cabinet was equally the result of the cooperation of various specialists contributing to it. In the present painting, different hands can be discerned in the execution of the figure and the objects and maybe in the city view too. While their identity remains unknown, the painting is likely the product of an Antwerp workshop. Here the division of labor supervised by the guild resulted in an increase of volume by which the demand from the market for such paintings could be met. Indeed, the paintings of collectors cabinets appealed to the so called 'liefhebbers der consten', a term given to the great number of connoisseurs and art lovers in Antwerp and elsewhere, who had adopted the attitude of curiosity and collecting, which previously had only belonged to courtly circles resulting in the 'kunstkamer'.

In contrast to the 'kunstkamer' with its more secret character, the new collections of paintings, naturalia and artificialia were easily accessible and served as rooms for hosting friends and other connoisseurs, as much as *microcosmi* of the wonders of the world, in which the owner could withdraw himself for study. Whereas the Medieval culture had laid emphasis on doctrines, the new era now emphasized individual judgment based on the scrutinized use of the senses. Series of the five senses confirmed this new emphasis, the most important being the one by Jan Brueghel I and Sir Peter Paul Rubens, of 1617/8, now in the Prado, which served as the point of departure for all other subsequent series.

Marina Aarts



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dipinto in cornice