

MADONNA AND CHILD with St. Mary Magdalene

Artist: Unknown
Date: 16th Century ca.
Dimensions: 63 x 53 cm
Material: Oil on wood panel
Inventory Number: 41632

Total Cost: € 11.930,00

STATE OF PRESERVATION:

The painting needs scientific analysis of the wood, the pigments and the preparation. The panel will subsequently be cleaned and restored.

RESTORATION PROCESS INCLUDES:

- Scientific investigations
- Study of possible previous restorations
- Reattachment of the painting to its support
- Cleaning and touching up of the gaps
- Reintegration of the pictorial surface
- Reapplication and balancing of the protective coating
- Photographic documentation

During the second half of the 15th century and even more in the 16th century, there was an amazing increase in the demand for religious paintings done in a small or medium format. Intended for private devotion, they were also considered precious objects demonstrating the value of the artist and the good taste of the customer.

These objects were often commissioned to celebrate or commemorate family events of major importance, such as weddings, births or deaths, which responded to different themes.

Among the most popular subjects were scenes of the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi and episodes of the Passion. Along with these scenes, popular images include those of the Madonna and Child, often along with St. John and the Holy Family surrounded by Saints.

The most important Italian Renaissance masters, including Perugino, Botticelli, Luca Signorelli, Giovanni Bellini, Raphael, Leonardo, Michelangelo, have all left numerous examples of works intended for private devotion.

These artists often took advantage of the collaboration of their workshops to meet the huge demand for their works by replicating pieces with minor variations. For example, two beautiful Raphael variations on the same subject are the Madonna of the meadow, or the Belvedere (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum), and the Madonna of the Goldfinch (Florence, Uffizi Gallery), in which the Virgin is depicted holding baby Jesus while St. John is seated on the side. Paintings of this kind have certainly inspired the painter who made the small image presented on this page of the Wishbook.

There is an open landscape only partially hidden by the elegant figure of St. Mary Magdalene, shown with her characteristic jar of perfume.

It is not certain if this painting belongs to the 16th century or not. Some conservative elements and styles point to the possibility that this panel was either heavily restored or created in the nineteenth century, in a time when the themes and techniques of the Renaissance were heavily appreciated and artists often tried to emulate the calm and unattainable beauty of Italian Madonnas of this period.

The restoration may possibly verify the exact century in which it was made through scientific investigations and the cleanup of the painted surface.

