

VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH A GOLDFINCH

Artist: Spinello Aretino
 Date: 1400 ca.
 Dimensions: 121 x 77 cm
 Material: Tempera on wood with gilded frame
 Inventory Number: 40186

Total Cost: € 15.000,00

STATE OF PRESERVATION:

The painting is unfortunately not in a good state of preservation. The wood is affected by termites and has several large vertical fissures. There are alterations in the colors due to oxidation and aging of the varnishes. The wood panel of this painting requires a new support with steel bars which will allow greater flexibility of movement and avoid further cracks. The frame is also in need of restoration in order not to interfere with the natural movements of the wood panel.

RESTORATION PROCESS INCLUDES:

- Anti-infestation measures
- Consolidation of the wooden support system
- Location of new steel bars on the back
- Cleaning of the pictorial layer and removal of previous restorative interventions
- Cleaning and consolidation of the pictorial surfaces
- Stuccoing of the cracks
- Touching-up of the pictorial and gilt surfaces
- Photographic documentation
- Application of new varnishes



This work is composed of three poplar-wood panels on which an image of the Virgin Mary with baby Jesus on her lap is depicted. Jesus is holding a small bird, a goldfinch, in his right hand and clutching his mother's finger in his left hand. Angels surround the throne where the Virgin is seated, decorating the background and adoring the baby Jesus.

Spinello Aretino (c. 1350 – c. 1410) was an Italian painter and a pupil of Jacopo del Casentino. The style and composition of Aretino also show the heavy influence of Taddeo Gaddi (c. 1290 – 1366), a medieval Italian painter and architect. Gaddi was a member of Giotto's workshop from 1313 to 1337. An avid follower of Giotto, Aretino's own style became a combination between the school of Giotto and that of Siena.

As a young man, Aretino worked in Florence as an assistant to his master Casentino, painting frescoes in the churches of the Carmine and in Santa Maria Novella. Between 1360 and 1384 he worked on many frescoes in and nearby Arezzo, though many of them have unfortunately been lost. After the sack of Arezzo in 1384, Aretino returned to Florence where, between 1387 and 1388, he decorated the walls and vault of the sacristy of San Miniato in Florence with a series of frescoes depicting scenes from the life of Saint Benedict. Giotto-like in composition, they are highlighted by the decorative brilliance of Sienese colors. These frescoes still exist but are in very poor condition.

Aretino completed another six frescoes between 1391 and 1392 which still remain on the south wall of the Campo Santo of Pisa and illustrate the miracles of St. Potitus and St. Ephesus. Among his later works is a very fine series of frescoes painted between 1407-1408 on the walls and vault of a chapel in the municipal buildings of Siena. These works were later painted over but remain some of the finest of Aretino's existing frescoes. Sixteen of these frescoes represent the war of Frederick Barbarossa against the republic of Venice.

