Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Guglielmo Caccia MONCALVO (Montabone di Acqui 1568 - Moncalvo 1625)

Flying Putti Holding a Veil and a Crown, Another with a Censer Below

Black chalk, pen and brown ink, with touches of white heightening, on blue-green paper.
244 x 300 mm. (9 5/8 x 11 3/4 in.)

Although similarly playful putti are found throughout the corpus of paintings and frescoes of Moncalvo, the draughtsmanship of the present sheet is perhaps more refined and the faces of the putti more individualized than is usual for the artist. Nevertheless, somewhat comparable studies of putti may be found among the drawings by Moncalvo in the Biblioteca Reale in Turin, as well as in a drawing by the artist of putti with musical instruments on clouds, formerly in the collection of Ian Woodner and sold at auction in 1991. The facial types are also similar to a drawing by Moncalvo that was exhibited at Colnaghi in 1968 and later appeared at auction in London.

Provenance:

Anonymous sale, New York, Sotheby's, 14 January 1987, lot 48
Dr. E. Kafka, New York.

Artist description:

One of the most important and prolific Piedmontese artists of the first quarter of the 17th century, Gugielmo Caccia was probably trained in Casale Monferrato before moving to Vercelli. There he absorbed the influences of Gaudenzio Ferrari and Bernardino Lanino, as is evident in his decoration of one of the chapels of the Sacro Monte at Crea, completed around 1590. In 1593 he settled in the town of Moncalvo, from which he adopted his name. Between 1605 and 1608 he worked in Turin, collaborating with Federico Zuccaro and several other artists on the decoration of the vault of the Grande Galleria, the very long corridor linking the Palazzo Madama with the new Palazzo Ducale, with a series of forty-eight 'imagini celesti'. Commissioned by Carlo Emanuele I, Duke of Savoy, the decoration of the gallery, which was destroyed by fire in 1659, was to be the only major secular commission of Moncalvo's career. He also worked, on his own, in the Palazzo Madama and the Palazzo del Viccobone, although nothing survives of either project.

Soon after his return to Piedmont, Moncalvo reached the height of his activity, painting frescoes and altarpieces for churches throughout Piedmont and Lombardy, notably San Marco in Novara and San

Domenico in Chieri. He declined the opportunity to work on the Sacro Monti of Varallo and Orta, choosing instead to complete the decoration of the cupola of the church of San Vittore al Corpo in Milan, where he worked alongside Daniele Crespi. By 1620 he was back in Moncalvo, from where he continued to supply paintings for churches in Turin, Alessandria and elsewhere. He had several pupils, among whom was his daughter Orsola Maddalena, a nun in a local convent, who assisted him on a number of his late paintings. Significant groups of drawings by the artist are today in the collections of both the Biblioteca Reale and the Museo Civico d'Arte Antica in Turin, and the Escola de Belas Artes in Oporto, Portugal.