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Galería de Arte

Soraya Cartategui

Dear friends,

For June we have chosen this fantastic Holy Family by Erasmus Quellinus II (The Younger), a prominent Flemish painter and illustrator of religious, allegorical and historical paintings.

Best wishes,
Soraya Cartategui



Erasmus Quellinus II (El Joven)

(Antwerp 1607 – 1678)

“The Holy Family”

Oil on canvas

68,11 in. x 47, 63 in. (176 x 121 cm.)

1635 ca.

was very interested in the tendencies of the Flemish Caravaggio followers artists like Theodoor Rombouts o Gerrard Seghers. In 1633 he was appointed Master in the Guild of Saint Luke of Antwerp, and in that same decade he collaborated on several times with Rubens, the first was participating in the ephemeral decorations for the entry of Cardinal-Infant Mr. Fernando of Austria in Antwerp. His collaboration in the decoration of the Parada Tower had greater repercussion in Spain, for which he made six paintings, according to the Rubens sketches, which are kept in the Prado Museum. However, in the following decade he multiplied the plasticity of his figures, looking like painted sculptures. His style is closer to that of Rubens' high baroque.

Rubens recommended him to make the illustration for the company Planting, becoming the official illustrator of that company, and from 1640 he was appointed Antwerp's official painter.

He collaborated frequently with other artists, such as D. Seghers, J.P. van Thielen, C. Van Son, J.P. Brueghel and J. van Kessel I. In addition, he had several students between 1633 and 1673, including his son Jan Erasmus and Walerant Vailant.

Quellinus II was an artist who enjoyed great recognition and admiration, who stood out for his great skill in handing light and color.



Facing Holland, in the seventeenth century Flanders continues to remain under the Catholic influence of Spain. During the Baroque period and as in previous periods, the most famous and rich artistic manifestation is pictorial, which is linked to traditional Flemish painting and shows a parallel development to Dutch painting, including the new genres that take place in it.

The interest for the Italian art will be maintained, and the constant relation especially with Venetian painters. The most prominent figure, and one of the geniuses of the universal painting of all times, is Pedro Pablo Rubens, whose work will have a great transcendental importance in the rest of Europe.



Our canvas dates from ca. 1635, during the youthful period of Quellinus, when he followed the trail of his teacher Rubens. In fact, this artwork has similar characteristics to "The Virgin with the Child, Saint Elizabeth and Saint John the Baptist" by Rubens, made around 1618 and which is currently in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum. In fact, it is not strange that he relied on this painting to carry out his work because in that moment it was very popular and influenced many artists, and it was also copied by many others. Obviously, we are talking about an influence and not a copy, since not even the subject is the same.

Still we see how the Virgin of Quellinus reminds us of Rubens, although the greatest resemblance is found in children: Quellinus' Jesus bears a strong likeness to Rubens' Saint John the Baptist. Both have the stubby hands characteristic of Rubens' children's figures, and faces remind Alberto, the son of Rubens.



The composition of great beauty and balance shows a very tender scene in which the Virgin Mary contemplates with great sweetness her son Jesus, who sleeps peacefully in his lap. The Virgin's figure occupies most of the painting, which gives it a great prominence, enhanced by the red dress and the cobalt blue cape that she

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use red, blue and white to highlight the figures with respect to the rest of the scene created from other tones. But the great technical expertise of the author is evident in the transparent veil that covers part of the hair, and how he has achieved that texture thanks to the brush-strokes.



In his case, the baby Jesus is completely naked asleep peacefully in his mother's lap on a white blanket. Surely it is a precaution that the virgin has taken in case the child feels cold afterwards. In fact, it is noticeable concern in the way for looking so tender that she dedicates to her son and in her arm that protects him from a possible fall if he moved.

The curious thing about the scene is that although it is very simple and touching we can get an idea of the divine character of the figure thanks to the slight halo that surrounds them. In the case of the Virgin it is very fine and in the area of the veil it is confused. On the contrary, in the case of Jesus it is of a much more white tone and it is clearly seen above his hair.

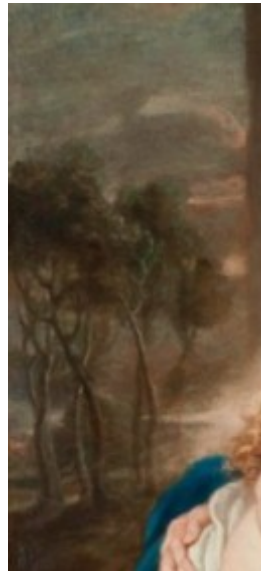


These two figures are covered in a clear light which gives them all the prominence, while Saint Joseph contemplates this scene so tender from a darker area. It is in the background, behind the virgin, with humble brown clothing that does not attract attention. His gesture is relaxed, with his head resting on his hand and absorbed in seeing how Jesus sleeps pleasantly in the lap of his mother.

original Christian conception in which the figure of St. Joseph would be avoided, disguising it from the second planes or representing it as an old man or both at the same time, always with the aim of safeguarding the purity of Mary.

In contrast to the humble costumes of Saint Joseph, in the foreground also on the right there is represented an elegant golden cradle. In this cradle there are four angels with wings carved each in a corner and four legs shaped like a lion's claw that join the two rockers. Evidently the little angels refer to protection, as in the well-known children's prayer "four little corners have my bed, four little angels that keep it for me", while the similarity with the lion is done in Genesis 49: 9; "Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him?"

At the bottom right, we can see a sandy ground dotted with some trees that brings both perspective and warmth to the scene. This feeling occurs largely because despite the gray clouds of the sky you can glimpse a sunset, thanks to orange brush-strokes interspersed in the gray sky. Thanks to it, It creates a more tender and loving atmosphere that helps to accentuate the feelings that Mary transmits through her kind gaze.



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- R. H. Wilenski Vol.I pag. 628. Plates 62

PROVENANCE

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Giorgio Caretto Gallery, Turin, 1989
Private collection, Brescia, de 1990 a 2017

EXHIBITIONS

Turin, Italy, Giorgio Caretto Gallery, "31" Mostra Maestri Fiamminghi ed Olandesi del XVI- XVII secolo, 105 Opere d'autore, N 75; November-December 1990.

MUSEUMS

Existen obras de Erasmus Quellinus II (El Joven) en las colecciones de museos de las siguientes ciudades entre otras: Aachen, Alemania, Museo Suermondt-Ludwig; Amiens, Francia, Mus. De Picardie; Ámsterdam, Holanda, Paleis of the Dam; Amberes, Bélgica, Iglesia de St. Andreas, Iglesia de St. Jacob. K.M.S.K., Museo Myer van den Bergh, Museo Plantin-Moretus, Veeshuis, Volkskundemus; Bailleul, Francia, Abbey de St. Marie du Mont; Bamberg, Alemania, Statsgal en el N.R.; Berlín, Alemania, Museo Staal Gr. (Museo Bode) Staatl. Museo Preussischer Kulturbesitz Gg (Mus. Dalhem); Bonheiden, Bélgica, Iglesia de O.L.V.; Bordeaux, Francia, M.B.A.; Brujas, Bélgica, Catedral de St. Salvador, Iglesia de St. Walburgis, Iglesia de O.L.V. Groeningemus; Brunswick, Alemania, H.A.U. Mus.; Bruselas, Bélgica, Convento de las Ursulinas, M.R.B.A.B.; Budapest, Hungría, Szépmvészeti Mus.; Caen, Francia, M.B.A.; Castel Gandolfo, Italia, Museo Vaticani; Gincinatti, Ohio-USA, A.Mus, Dessau, Alemania, Staatl. Museo Castillo de Mosigkau; Dieppe, Francia, Chateau-Museum; Douai, Francia, Museo de la Chartreuse; Dresden, Alemania, Staatl. Kunstsmg. Gg.; Dunkerque, Francia, M.B.A.; Florencia, Italia, Uffizi.; Fort Worth, Texas- USA, Kimbell A. Museo; Gentbrugge, Bélgica, Iglesia de los Santos Apóstoles Simon y Judas.; Ghent, Bélgica, M.S.K.; Glasgow, Gran Bretaña, Universidad A. Coll; Graz, Alemania, Steiermarkisches Landesmus, Joanneum; Halle, Iglesia de St. Nicholas; Hamburgo, Alemania, Kunsth.; Hoboken, Bélgica, Iglesia de O.L.V.; Honfleur, Francia, Iglesia de Ste. Chaterine; Indianapolis, Indiana-USA, Museo de A.; Jacksonville, Florida.USA, Cummer Gal de A.; Jerusalén, Israel, Museo de Israel; Kansas City, Misuri, USA, Nelson-Atkins Museo de A.; Karlsruhe, Alemania, Staatl. Kunstsmg.; Kassel, Alemania, Staatl. Museo Gg.; Knokke, Bélgica, Iglesia de St. Margareta; Kontich, Bélgica, Dekenji; Leuven, Bélgica, Iglesia de St. Michiel, Convento de las Docters Maria van Leuven; Liége, Bélgica, Catedral de St. Paul, Iglesia de Ste. Véronique; Lille, Francia, M.B.A.; Lisboa, Portugal, M.N.A.A.; Madrid, España, Prado; Mannheim, Alemania, Stadtisches Reiss-Museum; Mechelen, Bélgica, Catedral de St. Rombout; Milán, Italia, Pin. Di Brera; Múnich, Alemania, Alte Pin, Bayern Staatsgemaldehy.; Munster, Alemania, Weltfalishes Landesmus para K.K.; Nantes, Francia, M.B.A., Nápoles, Italia, Museo y Galería de Naz. Di Capodimonte; Nueva York, NY-USA, Catedral de St. John Divino; Nivelles, Bélgica, Iglesia de St. Nicolas; Norfolk, VA-USA, Chrysler Museum; Philadelphia, PA-USA, J.G. Johnson A. Collm Philadelphia Museo de A.; Potsdam, Alemania, Staatl. Schlosser und Garten Postdam-Sanssourci; Poznán, Polonia, Museo Nadorowe; Praga, Checoslovaquia, Národní Galerie v Praze; Saint Petersburg, Rusia, Hermitage.; Schwerin, Alemania, Museo Staal; Sibiu, Rumania, Museo Brunkenthal; Estocolmo, Suecia, Statens Konstmus; La Haya, Holanda, Maurithuis; Toulouse, Francia, Museo de los Agustinos; Vaduz, Florencia, Smlg. Des Regierenden Fursten von Liechtenstein; Valenciennes, Francia, M.B.A.; Ciudad del Vaticano, Museo y Galería Pontificia; Verbiers, Bélgica, M.B.A., Viena, Austria, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vorst, Bélgica, Iglesia de St. Gertrudis; Worcester, Massachusetts-USA, Museo de A.; Worlitz, Alemania, Staatl. Schlosser y Garten.

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