

CHRISTIE’S



“BRUEGHEL
PLACES YOU,
THE VIEWER,
RIGHT THERE,
A PART OF THE CROWD”

The Coppée *Saint John the Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness* has long been recognised as one of the finest treatments of what was Pieter Bruegel the Younger’s most successful, and popular, large-scale compositions of a religious subject matter.

Unseen on the market for over seventy years and described by Klaus Ertz as of ‘outstanding quality’, this monumental panel is one of the best preserved examples of the subject by the artist who was inspired by his father, Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s picture of 1566, now in the Szépművészeti Museum, Budapest.

Scholars have long held the view that the composition offered a coded commentary on the religious debates that raged in the countries in 1560s and found its genesis in the clandestine sermons that Protestant reformers were attending in the countryside at that time. In his depiction of people from all walks of life, from the simply dressed peasants and pilgrims to the elegantly attired and armed young men, Bruegel has given a wonderful and colourful context, of contemporary Flemish life, to the ostensibly religious theme of the picture, and produced a work of timeless appeal. Bruegel places you, the viewer, right there; a part of the crowd, witnessing this world-changing moment.

PAUL RAISON

Head of Department – Old Master Paintings

above
PIETER BRUEGHEL II (BRUSSELS 1564/5–1637/8 ANTWERP)
The Preaching of Saint John the Baptist in the Wilderness
oil on panel
40 x 65 1/4 in. (102 x 167 cm.)
£1,000,000 – £1,500,000

opposite clockwise from top left:
FRA BARTOLOMMEO (FLORENCE 1472–1517)
The Madonna and Child in a landscape with Saint Elizabeth and the Infant
Saint John the Baptist
oil on panel
58 1/2 x 47 1/4 in. (148.6 x 121.7 cm.)
£2,000,000 – £3,000,000

FRANS HALS (ANTWERP 1581/5–1666 HAARLEM)
The head of a boy
oil on panel
11 1/4 in. (29.9 cm.) diam.
£300,000 – £500,000

SIR ANTHONY VAN DYCK (ANTWERP 1599–1641 LONDON)
Saint Bartholomew
oil on panel
25 x 19 1/4 in. (63.5 x 48.5 cm.)
£500,000 – £700,000



IN THE PRESENCE OF GREAT MASTERS
IT IS NOT ONLY IN MUSEUMS THAT THE
WORKS OF THE GREATEST MASTERS
ARE ACCESSIBLE.
IMPOSING AND MONUMENTAL, BUT
ALSO SHOWING INTIMACY AND GREAT
TENDERNESS, FRA BARTOLOMMEO’S

MADONNA AND CHILD, COMPLETED IN 1516, SHOWS THE DEEPLY-HELD RELIGIOUS CONVICTION OF THIS IMPORTANT HIGH-RENAISSANCE FLORENTINE ARTIST, WHO DREW ON THE WORK OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES LEONARDO, BOTTICELLI, PERUGINO AND MICHELANGELO, AND WAS HIMSELF A FORMATIVE INFLUENCE ON RAPHAEL. VAN DYCK’S *SAINT BARTHOLOMEW*, PAINTED CIRCA 1618 IS A PANEL FROM A SERIES DEPICTING THE APOSTLES THAT WAS INSPIRED BY THE ARTIST’S MASTER, RUBENS. FRANS HALS’S *HEAD OF A BOY* IS A SMALL AND VIGOROUSLY PAINTED ‘TONDO’ SHOWING SPONTANEITY AND HUGE CHARM; COMPLETED CIRCA 1640-42, IT BEARS ALL THE HALLMARKS OF THE GREAT 17TH CENTURY DUTCH MASTER.

