LOT 354

PROPERTY OF THE MUSEUM OF VANCOUVER, VANCOUVER, CANADA

NINE RARE TERRACOTTA SCULPTOR’S MODELS, ATTRIBUTED TO JOHANN GREGOR VAN DER SCHARDT (1530- CIRCA 1580) AND WORKSHOP, LATE 16TH OR 17TH CENTURY

Comprising: a right arm, after Michelangelo’s Evening, Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo, Florence; a right hand, after the figure of Lorenzo de Medici on his tomb, Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo, Florence; a left arm, shoulder, and part of back, after Michelangelo’s Evening, Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo, Florence; a right leg, bent with shin strap, after the figure of Giuliano de Medici on his tomb, Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo, Florence; a torso of a male youth, possibly after the antique; a left leg, straight (with an indistinct inscription in the clay on the upper edge); a right leg, bent, after the figure of Giuliano de Medici on his tomb, Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo, Florence; a left hand, after the figure of Giuliano de Medici on his tomb, Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo, Florence; a left foot and ankle

3 to 8 1/4 in.; 7.7 to 21 cm.

ESTIMATE 200,000-300,000 USD

PROVENANCE

Paul von Praun (1548-1616), Nuremberg, probably acquired from the estate of the artist Johann Gregor Van der Schardt as part of the contents of his studio, circa 1580
The Praunsche Kabinett, Haus am Weinmarkt, Nuremberg
Johann Friedrich Frauenholz (1758-1822), Nuremberg, acquired from the above in 1801
Oberstleutnant von Gemmingen, Nuremberg, acquired from the above in 1803
The sculptor Professor Ernst Julius Haehnel (1811-1891), Dresden, acquired from the above in 1842
Anna Hähnel, by descent from the above
Elise Walter Hähnel, by descent from the above
Dr. A. B. Heyer, London  
His sale, Christie’s, London, February 24, 1938, lots 62, 68 (two), 70, 71, 81, 82 (two), and 83 (one of five included in the lot)  
J. Wolff, Montreal, some acquired from the above auction  
By bequest to Wolff’s sons, Peter and Paul LeBrooy, Vancouver, Canada  
By sale after Paul LeBrooy’s death, to consortium of individuals, Vancouver, Canada  
Gifted from the above, the Museum of Vancouver, Vancouver, Canada

EXHIBITED
The Trans-Canada Exhibition Tour, 1972-1973
Cascade Gallery, Seattle Center, December 9, 1977 – March 12, 1978 “The Exhibition Tour of Four Cities: Seattle, Edmonton, Detroit, and Calgary”
The Exhibition Tour of the Republic of South Africa of Four Cities: Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and Pretoria

LITERATURE

CATALOGUE NOTE
The terracotta models formerly in the collection assembled by Paul von Praun in Nuremberg are a remarkable survival of the studio practice of a late Renaissance sculptor. Six of the nine models offered here are recognizable as studies after anatomical elements seen in famous monuments sculpted by Michelangelo Buonarotti. The practice of making copies after ancient Greek and Roman sculptures was central to the education and stylistic development of artists of the Renaissance; these artists also learned by copying their immediate predecessors and contemporaries, particularly the works of great masters. The von Praun models are rare examples of study-models of Michelangelo’s work by a talented younger artist working within the master’s lifetime or shortly after his death.
The collection of Paul von Praun, a wealthy Nuremberg silk merchant, was one of the most extensive of its time, and one of the first to include a comprehensive, international group of contemporary sculpture. Leonardo, Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, Titian, Correggio, Durer and Breughel were but a few of the artists represented. Von Praun’s collection also included a number of drawings; his acquisition and preservation of sculptural studio models reveals his interest not only in the antique and Renaissance sculptures from which they were copied, but also in the process by which formal artistic ideas were studied and transmitted. After von Praun’s death in 1616 the collection was kept together by his heirs, displayed in Nuremberg, and ultimately became known as the Praunsche Kabinett. Among its visitors were Goethe and Marie Antoinette before its sale in 1801.

Although the preservation of such terracotta studies is rare, a number of artists of the late 16th century are recorded
as having produced small-scale terracotta and wax sculptures, including Niccolò Tribolo (1500-1558) and Michelangelo; a 1548 engraving depicting Baccio Bandinelli (fig. 1) shows the sculptor in his studio surrounded by miniature torsos and statuettes. Determination of the date and authorship of the von Praun terracottas, which are unsigned, begins with their continuous, documented provenance from the Praunsche Kabinett to the present day. They are listed generically in von Praun’s inventories without reference to an artist. Prime among the contemporary sculptors patronized by Paul von Praun was a Northern sculptor, Johann Gregor van der Schardt, who worked extensively in terracotta. Von Praun acquired the contents of van der Schardt’s studio after the artist’s death circa 1580, and owned 180 of his works. Stylistic comparisons of examples in the group of terracotta studies to signed and documented sculptures by van der Schardt support the hypothesis that these small sculptures are by his hand, and were among the contents of the studio purchased by von Praun.

The von Praun terracottas enjoyed the attentions of ambitious scholars in the 19th and 20th centuries. Their undisputable association with famous works by Michelangelo has on occasion been the source of historical confusion; the unsustainable notion that these were in fact preparatory studies by Michelangelo himself has been proposed and disproven. Recent scholarship on van der Schardt, a close follower of Michelangelo and an accomplished sculptor in his own right, has clarified their place in the history of sculpture and has given us a rare window into the methods of a student of the greatest Renaissance master.

Only one signed work by Johann Gregor van der Schardt survives: a bronze statuette of Mercury probably presented to the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II in Vienna circa 1569. The subtly modeled anatomy of that figure compares well with the small terracotta torso included in the present group, further supporting the attribution. Van der Schardt’s oeuvre includes several other bronze statuettes including Minerva, Bacchus, and allegorical figures of the Sun and Moon, which show a strong Italian influence; having studied in Rome and probably Florence during his formative years, studying and copying masterpieces of antiquity and the Renaissance. A pair of terracottas of Dawn and Night, after Michelangelo’s marbles for the Medici Chapel in San Lorenzo in Florence, also owned by Paul von Praun, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Boucher, op. cit., no. 31). Perhaps van der Schardt’s most refined mature works are his lifelike polychrome terracotta busts. In addition to an ambitious self-portrait today in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, he made portraits in this style of various monarchs and wealthy patrons in the 1570s and 80s. The King and Queen of Denmark as well as the art collector Willibald Imhoff (1519-80) and his wife Anna were among his sitters. Imhoff may indeed have been responsible for introducing van der Schardt to the Nuremberg patrician-collector Paul von Praun. Van der Schardt would become the best represented artist in von Praun’s collection, with 180 works there recorded, including a terracotta self-portrait medallion; in addition to works by the sculptor in von Praun’s collection were two painted portraits of the sculptor by other artists, Hans Hoffmann and Nicolas Neufchatel. We owe to this special relationship between artist and collector the fortunate and rare preservation of the terracotta sculptor’s models, acquired by von Praun after van der Schardt’s death.

Thermoluminescence analysis reports from Oxford Authentication, Ltd, dated December 2, 2010, and March 3, 2011, state that that the estimated date of last firing of samples N110m82, N110m84, N110m85, N110m86, N110m87, N110m88, N110m89, and N111b28 was between 200 and 400 years ago. Analysis of sample N111b27 (taken from the straight left leg) was inconclusive as the “sample was affected by restoration material so cannot be dated.”

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**Fig. 1**

Engraving depicting Baccio Bandinelli in his studio, after Niccolò della Casa, circa 1548
Fig. 2

Detail of back and shoulder of Evening, marble Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475-1564), Tomb of Giuliano de’ Medici, Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo, Florence

Fig. 3

Detail of bent right leg with shin strap, marble Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475-1564), Tomb of Giuliano de’ Medici, Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo, Florence Detail of left hand, marble Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475-1564), Tomb of Giuliano de’ Medici, Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo, Florence