LOT 17
PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK
GIOVANNI DE LORENZO LARCIANI, FORMERLY THE MASTER OF THE KRESS LANDSCAPES
FLORENCE 1484 - 1527
MADONNA AND CHILD
oil on panel, unframed
26 by 19 in.; 66 by 48.2 cm.

ESTIMATE 100,000-150,000 USD

PROVENANCE
Finanni family, San Gimignano;
Mazzanti family, Pistoia (according to the wax seals on the reverse).

LITERATURE
CATALOGUE NOTE

The identity of the so-called Master of the Kress Landscapes was securely established by Louis A. Waldman as the Florentine painter Giovanni di Lorenzo Larciani.\(^1\) This artist’s highly individual oeuvre was originally constructed by Federico Zeri around a set of three landscape spalliere panels formerly in the Samuel H. Kress collection, and now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.\(^2\) As his former pseudonym implies, Larciani often made use of beautiful, stylized landscapes usually combining dramatic, rocky terrains painted with a confident, swift brushwork.\(^3\) Despite his singular style, Larciani was very much aware of the major developments in Florentine painting of the time, especially the works of Fra Bartolommeo and Francesco Granacci, in whose studio he may have worked.

In this Madonna and Child, the artist has set his two figures against one of his characteristic landscapes, here with a group of houses, one with a smoking chimney, on the left and a typical craggy mountain at the right. Most striking is the exotic, stylized arrangement of palm leaves rising up dramatically behind the Virgin’s head.

Two other works by Larciani, also depicting the Christ Child clutching his mother’s breast, and with the same fleshy thighs, arched feet and protruding heels, are in the Galleria Borghese, Rome and the Museo Civico, Arezzo.\(^4\)

4. See F. Zeri, op. cit., p. 220, reproduced fig. 7 and p. 225, reproduced fig. 16, respectively.