LOT 81
PROPERTY FROM A DISTINGUISHED COLLECTION
JACOPO ROBUSTI, CALLED JACOPO TINTORETTO
VENICE 1518 - 1594
ALLEGORY OF AUTUMN
oil on canvas, the corners made up, with additions to the right and left edges
40 1/4 by 82 5/8 in.; 102 by 210 cm.

ESTIMATE 300,000-500,000 USD

PROVENANCE
Commissioned by the Barbo family for their palace, Ca’ Barbo in San Panteleone, Venice, where seen by Carlo Ridolfi, before 1642 (see note);
Private collection, Bergamo, by 1982;
Anonymous sale, Venice, Franco Semenzato & C., 22 May 1983, lot 87 (as Tintoretto and an Allegory of Winter);
Art market, Tokyo;
Where acquired.

LITERATURE
C. Ridolfi, Vita di Giacopo Robusti detto il Tintoretto, celebre pittore, cittadino venetiano, Venice 1642, p. 75 (republished in Delle Maraviglie dell’Arte, ovvero Delle Vite degli’illustri Pittori Veneti e dello Stato, Venice 1648, 1835 edition, p. 233);
R. Pallucchini and P. Rossi, Tintoretto, Le opera sacre e profane, Milan 1982, vol. I, p. 176, cat. no. 211, reproduced vol. II, fig. 277 (as depicting Winter?, and dateable to 1555-1558);
J.C. Harrison, The Chrysler Museum Handbook of the European and American Collections, Selected Paintings, Sculpture and Drawings, Norfolk 1991, p. 13 (as Winter);


R. Echols, in M. Falomir, ed., Tintoretto, exhibition catalogue, Madrid 2007, under cat. no. 6, reproduced p. 206, fig. 106;


S.W.C. Horn, "Discolor of a Green Pigment in Tintoretto's Allegorical Figure of Spring and Analysis of the Chemical Properties and Stability of Copper Resinate," in Chemistry and Biochemistry Theses and Disserations, 13, Masters Dissertation, Old Dominion University, 2016, p. 4;


CATALOGUE NOTE

This monumental figure of a recumbent man as an Allegory of the Season of Autumn, was painted by the young Tintoretto in circa 1546 for the Barbo family as part of a ceiling decorating a room in the Ca' Barbo, their 15th Century palazzo near the church of San Pantaleone, Venice. It was described by Carlo Ridolfi in his list of the artist's works: In Casa Barba [sic] a San Pantaleone miransi nell'intavolato d'una stanza un Capriccio de' Sogni, et alcune Deità in un Cielo, con varie imagini delle cose apportate nel Sonno alle menti de'mortalii, e le Quattro stagioni in figura nel recinto.\(^1\)

As described by Ridolfi, who would have seen it in the early 17th century, the ceiling has been able to be largely reconstructed.\(^2\) The central canvas is the Dreams of Men, now in the Detroit Institute of Arts (inv. no. 23.11). Three of the seasons have been identified as well: Spring is in the Chrysler Museum, Norfolk (inv. no. 71.527); Summer is in the National Gallery, Washington, DC, (inv. no. 191.9.90). This canvas, which depicts the draped figure of mature man reclining amongst barren trees, is the season of Autumn. Although he has sometimes been identified as “Winter,” his youth and lack of a long flowing white beard counter the usual iconography for that season.\(^3\) If Tintoretto painted the figures of Spring and Summer as the goddesses Flora and Ceres respectively, then this robust, youthful figure would more likely correspond, as Echols suggests, to the gods Bacchus or Vertumnus, both closely connected to the fall harvest. All of the canvases were originally octagonal in format, as the Detroit canvas still is; the extant seasons have all had the corners made up to form rectangular pictures.\(^4\)

While the grouping of the paintings together as part of the Barbo ceiling has been generally accepted, there has been some dispute amongst previous scholars as to their dating. No documentary evidence has been found regarding the commission, and Ridolfi’s brief discussion of the ceiling was published a full century after the likely creation of the paintings. Palluchini dated the pictures to 1555-8, based on comparison with the Meeting of Tamar and Judah in the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid (inv. no. 401, 1977.70). Pierluigi De Vecchi considered the Barbo paintings to date from around 1565-6,\(^5\) while other scholars have suggested a dating as late as the late 1570s. More recently, however, Echols and Ilchman (see 2007 and 2009 literature) have proposed an earlier origin for the group, circa 1546, by comparison to other mythological canvases of the mid-1540s, including the Contest of Apollo and Marsyas in the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT (inv. no. 1950.438) and the Venus and Mars in the Alte
Pinakothek, Munich (inv. no. 9257). This would place the Barbo ceiling and the present Autumn to only slightly before Tintoretto’s Miracle of the Slave (1548, Accademia, Venice), the indisputable masterpiece of the artist’s early career. This dating seems likely based on stylistic elements in the painting. Indeed, Echols (see 2007 literature) notes that Tintoretto would have certainly seen and been likely influenced by Giorgio Vasari’s ceiling for the Palazzo Corner of only a few years earlier, which also featured allegorical figures in an oblong format. Clearly, the young Tintoretto was reacting to a broad spectrum of influences both from inside and outside Venice. In the case of the present Autumn, the classicizing and athletic figure of the god is perhaps more reminiscent of Michelangelo and Central Italian painting than local Venetian prototypes.

1. “In Casa Barba in the parish of San Pantaleone can be seen set into the wooden paneling of a room an Allegory of Dreams, and some Deities in the heavens, with differing images of the things brought to the minds of mortal men by sleep, and full length figures of the four seasons in coffered reserves.” See C. Ridolfi, Delle Maraviglie dell’Arte, ovvero Delle Vite degli illustri Pittori Veneti e dello Stato, 1648, 1835 edition, p. 233.

2. In 1959, Bertina Suida Manning was the first to attempt to reconstruct the Barbo ceiling soon after the Kress Foundation had acquired Summer, recognizing its relationship to the Spring, then in the private collection of Walter Chrysler, as well as the large canvas in Detroit. See B. Suida Manning, “Two ‘Seasons’ by Jacopo Tintoretto,” in Studies in the History of Art dedicated to Willem E. Suida on his Eightieth Birthday, 1959, pp. 253-257.

3. Winter is most often depicted in this manner, although there are exceptions. Echols along with other art historians notes the atypical depiction of the season by a female figure, probably Diana, in the clock face painted by Tintoretto’s workshop for the Sala del Collegio in the Palazzo Ducale.

4. Suida Manning publishes a stripped photograph of Spring where the additions are visible (op.cit. p. 254, fig. 1).