

Sotheby's to Offer
A Masterpiece Drawing by Italian Renaissance Artist
ANDREA MANTEGNA

Recently Rediscovered Drawing for his Famed Series
THE TRIUMPHS OF CAESAR



Estimated to Achieve in Excess of \$12 Million

Highlighting Sotheby's Masters Week Auctions
In New York In January 2020

Public Traveling Exhibitions in
Hong Kong, Los Angeles, San Francisco, London & New York

Though sold as an autograph work by Mantegna in 1885, the drawing subsequently disappeared into private collections, and was totally unknown to scholars until shortly before the *Mantegna and Bellini* exhibition in London and Berlin. Its inclusion in that exhibition caused much excitement, but only since the exhibition have other extremely significant aspects of the drawing been identified, following further careful research by Cristiana Romalli, Senior Director and Italian specialist in Sotheby's Old Master Drawings Department. On the basis of new technical analysis using infrared photography, performed by



Sotheby's Department of Scientific Research, Romalli was able to establish that the main figure on the left side of the composition was altered very significantly during the process of the drawing's creation. Underneath the figure of Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine, which appears in the finished drawing and the final painted version, there is actually another entirely different figure, identified by Romalli as Helios, the Roman god of the Sun, which the artist chose to obliterate and replace as he developed his composition.

This change conclusively proves that Mantegna himself was the author of the drawing, and this remarkable and unexpected discovery sheds exciting light on Mantegna's restless working method, in which he continued to edit, refine and perfect his compositions, even in the final stages. Moreover, it is unquestionable proof that this is the only known surviving preparatory study for the *Triumphs*.

Speaking of the drawing, *Cristiana Romalli* said: "The discovery of a previously unseen underdrawing, more than five hundred years after it was made, is a moment of considerable importance for the study of this complex, intriguing and highly influential master of the early Italian Renaissance. By examination under special filtered infrared light, we were able to detect the hidden figure of Helios, revealing a major change in the composition that proves Mantegna's authorship. This change in fact defined his whole approach to the finished painting that we see today. The exceptional and rare opportunity to bring to light this news, obscured for centuries, is what defines the excitement and thrill of the drawings market. It is a great privilege to be handling the sale of a drawing of such extraordinary importance and rarity."

The drawing will be on view in Hong Kong, Los Angeles, San Francisco and London before returning to New York for exhibition beginning 24 January.**

** EXHIBITION CALENDAR

Hong Kong: 3 – 8 October

New York: 1 – 15 November

Los Angeles: 18 – 19 November

San Francisco: 21 November

London: 30 November – 4 December

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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium and are net of any fees paid to the purchaser where the purchaser provided an irrevocable bid.

Images are available upon request

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