

P R E S S R E L E A S E

30 NOVEMBER 2019

CORTOT & ASSOCIÉS
COMMISSAIRES PRISEURS



A WORK BY THE MASTER
OF VISSY BROD
SOLD 6.2 MILLION EUROS IN
DIJON, ON NOVEMBER 30, 2019.

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AUCTION HOUSE CORTOT ET ASSOCIÉS
IN DIJON, FRANCE
SELLS WORK BY MASTER OF VISSY BROD,
AUTHENTICATED BY CABINET TURQUIN,
FOR 6.2 MILLION EUROS

Highly anticipated by the market, a devotional panel of the *Virgin and Child Enthroned* painted around 1350 by the Master of Vissy Brod and authenticated by Cabinet Turquin in Paris, was offered for public sale by Cortot et Associés this Saturday 30 November in the French city of Dijon. The work elicited a superb bidding battle between nine buyers, four in the room and five on the phones.

Estimated €400,000 to €600,000, this painting – by one of the most important International Gothic masters – fetched no less than 6.2 million euros under the hammer of auctioneer Hugues Cortot. The successful bidder was the Benappi Fine Art Gallery on behalf of **New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.**

This result represents the second-best regional result of the year in France after a small panel painting by Cimabue fetched a stunning 24 million euros at Actéon Senlis on October 27 last.

"We are happy and proud to have shown that works of this importance can be sold far from the art market's recognised capitals to major international museums. We are also glad to contribute to the international promotion of the French art market."

Hugues Cortot

“It took us four months to make and categorically confirm the attribution. For France’s art market, and for us personally, the MET’s acquisition in the heart of the Bourgogne region represents a major seal of approval.”

Eric Turquin

The “Master of Vissy-Brod” is the name given to an anonymous mid-14th century painter whose work focused on an altarpiece painted for the Cistercian convent of Vissy Brod in southern Bohemia. One of the most remarkable examples of religious panel painting from the Middle Ages, the Master’s work is today exhibited at Prague’s National Gallery, the Convent of Saint Agnes of Bohemia. The scenes representing the *Annunciation*, *the Nativity*, *the Adoration* and the *Resurrection* are all attributed to the master, whereas the five other scenes are considered to have been painted by his workshop.

When our small panel was painted, Charles IV (1316-1378), King of Bohemia and later Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, was the most powerful sovereign in all of Christendom. He decides to make **Prague his capital and transforms the city into one of the greatest political and artistic centers of Europe**. He initiates the building of the St Vitus Cathedral (1344-1420) the Karlstein Castle (1348-1365) the University of Prague (1348) as well as numerous convents. Master craftsmen, workshops of painters, sculptors, glass-workers either local or foreign hailing from France, England and Germany, all organized into corporations, will be involved in the city’s embellishment.

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MASTER OF VISSY BROD, Bohemia, circa 1350

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD ENTHRONED

Devotional panel, Tempera on a fruitwood panel, H : 26 cm - L : 22,2cm (10,23 in x 8,7 in).

Estimate: 400.000/600.000€

Expert : Cabinet TURQUIN - Stéphane PINTA

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AN ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND REVEALED BY THE X-RADIOGRAPH

The stylistic analysis of the work shows the relationship between our Madonna with the Madonna's in *the Annunciation*, *the Nativity* or *the Glatz Madonna*, the other works attributed to the master (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie); the rhythms and elegance of the drawing of the drapery, the similarities in expression and execution, the richness of the ornamentation, all reveal the **sophisticated hand of the Master of Vissy Brod working around the year 1350 for a private commission.**



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But what is even more spectacular is the discovery of an underlying composition, today hidden by the black repainting, revealed by the x-ray. Under the black background that was added in the 19th century hides an architectural structure, consistent with the majority of panels and illuminations of this period from this region.

These scientific analyses also reveal that the panel has been slightly reduced along the top edge, as proven by the gallery of arcades that has been cut, as well as old woodworm tunnels that have been exposed along the panel's side.

Olga Pujmanova, honorary curator at the National Gallery in Prague and **Jan Klipa**, specialist in Gothic painting at the Art History Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague, have both confirmed the panel as being by Maître de Vissy Brod after having examined the work in person.

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