

# Anonymous Roman Painter

active in Rome between 1630 and 1650

## *Still Life with Fruit and Vegetables*

Oil on canvas

71 x 83 cm (28 by 32<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> in.)

### *Provenance:*

Private Collection, Italy

### *Exhibitions:*

*Natura in posa*, Bergamo 1968

### *Literature:*

Bologna (1968) pl.26 as Carlo Coppola

Volpe (1973) p.28 as P.P.Bonzi ?

Salerno (1984) p.94 as P.P.Bonzi

Until the exhibition in 1968 the still life of fruit and vegetables presented here was always attributed to the Neapolitan painter Carlo Coppola. Coppola was pupil of Aniello Falcone known for his battle scenes. The former attribution to Coppola was based on the comparison with two paintings, of which one is undoubtedly signed with a monogram: C.C.

This monogram led Ferdinando Bologna to attribute the paintings to Carlo Coppola. These two monogrammed paintings, which we only know from reproductions, show a very faint

affinity to the present painting. The painting from Capodimonte, previously attributed either to Guiseppe or to G.B. Ruoppolo, probably comes slightly closer.<sup>1</sup>

Some years later in an article on Giovanni Battista Crescenzi and the beginning of Roman still life painting, Carlo Volpe attributed the present painting to Pietro Paolo Bonzi called Il Gobbo dei Caracci. A decade later this attribution was confirmed by Luigi Salerno who did not mention the research by Volpe.

The catalogue of the works of the still life painter Pietro Paolo Bonzi is overall very general. The few secure and signed works by Bonzi have generated some doubts about the attributions chosen in the catalogue.

Nevertheless these signed works remain the only reliable source for a reconstruction of the personality of Gobbo dei Caracci. Therefore any further attribution must be based on these works. If one would exclude the decorations depicting in an amazingly natural spirit (taste) the garlands of flower, fruit and vegetables, which Bonzi had executed in collaboration with Pietro Cortona as a fresco in Palazzo Mattei in Rome in the year 1622/23, one would not even have had one work like this being documented.

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1) Exhibition catalogue (1964) pp.26-27



cat. no. XXVI

The two signed still lives of fruit and vegetable which can be dated to the first decades of the seventeenth century, were shown in the famous exhibition in Naples in 1964.

The composition in these paintings is a string of objects individually placed on two plains against a dark background. Noticeable is a recurring play of balance between the displayed fruits like grapes, pears and figs.

In the present painting the balance between the objects and especially between the objects and space is offset. But it should not be forgotten that in the first decades of the seventeenth century the still life painting as an independent genre was still in its first phase of evolution. The painter was more concerned about light and space than about the depiction of the objects. The fruits seem to have interested the artist less than their arrangement on the ledge and their exposure to light.

Laura Laureati

(Translation from  
the Italian by EL)



Pl.1 Pietro Paolo Bonzi, *Still Life with Fruit and Vegetables*  
Oil on canvas 100 x 136 cm, signed, Private Collection