



Domenico Fetti (Rome 1589 - Venice 1623)

David with the Head of Goliath

oil on canvas unlined
160.7 x 114.4 cm (63 1/4 x 45 inches)

This David with the head of Goliath is a version of one of Domenico Fetti's most enduringly popular compositions, created during his tenure as court painter to the Gonzaga family in Mantua (1614-1622). Fetti was evidently fascinated by the theme of David and Goliath, and at least five autograph versions are known. There are two half-length representations in the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Nuremberg and Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow (E. Safarik, Fetti, Milan, 1990, nos. 5-6); a full-length rendering, which is perhaps the best-known, in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden (op. cit., no. 7); a closely related variant, which sold at Christie's New York, on 4 June 2014, lot 21 (\$533,000) and is now in the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm (op. cit., no. 7b); and another full-length version that demonstrates the artist's late, lyrical Venetian style in the Galerie dell'Accademia, Venice (op. cit., no. 9). A chalk drawing relating to the Dresden picture and probably intended as a ricordo is in an Italian private collection (op. cit., no. 7a). More than fifteen variants of the composition have been recorded to date.

The present work conforms closely to the slightly larger Dresden composition (canvas, 160 x 120 cm.). Eduard Safarik, writing at the time of the 2008 sale (see Provenance), considered it to be among the best of the known variants. Though attributable in part to one of Fetti's assistants, Professor Safarik identified certain passages as being synonymous with the master's characteristic, rapid brushwork and exquisite rendering of light.

