



Virgin with Child and two Angels

Artist	Follower of Sandro Botticelli (Florence, 1444/45-Florence, 1510)
Origin date	between 1470-1500
Type	painting
Material	wood
Technique	gold, tempera
Sizes	magasság: 74 cm szélesség: 51 cm
Inventory No.	55.190



Description

Its stylistic features suggest that this Madonna may be associated with the workshop of Sandro Botticelli, one of the outstanding artistic personalities of the Florentine Renaissance. The composition is also based on an early work by the great master, the Sant'Ambrogio Altarpiece (Madonna and Child with Six Saints), painted in the 1470s and now preserved in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. From this large-scale altarpiece, measuring 170 × 194 cm, the unknown painter of the Esztergom panel copied only the central section: the figures of the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child, together with the straight-backed, barrel-vaulted Renaissance niche in the background.

The painter may, however, have found this reduced composition somewhat austere, and therefore supplemented it on either side with the figures of angels looking into the pictorial space. In the Esztergom painting, the pairing of Mary and the Child closely follows Botticelli's carefully considered composition, in which the harmonious and complex grouping of the two figures reveals a mature command of design. Mary supports her energetic, vigorous Child with her left hand. The Child's left hand is intertwined with his mother's right; leaning slightly forward, he looks out at the viewer, whom he greets with his raised right hand. Mary's gentle face is turned to the left, her gaze contemplatively directed into the distance. Her figure is emphasized by both the outer and inner arches of the niche.

The architectural elements and the perspectival structure were likewise adopted by the painter from Botticelli's model. Yet he was not content with the purified forms and monochrome marble surfaces of the niche in the original. In his own painting, he decorated the niche with marble surfaces of various colours and framed its outer edge with carved ornament in a braided pattern.

The two angels form an attractive frame around the Mother and Child. Both seek the viewer's gaze and hold long stems of lilies, symbols of Mary's virginity. The freshness of the flowers and the colourful garments of the angels bring variety and liveliness to the painting. At the same time, it is in the figures of the angels that the unknown follower's weaker artistic abilities become most apparent. The drapery folds are rendered in a harder and more mechanical manner; the figures are confined to a narrow space, and their relationship to the space borrowed from Botticelli is difficult to interpret. The angel on the right stands in front of the niche, yet his right shoulder disappears into the wall adjoining the niche frame. Numerous other variants of the painting are known, likewise associated with Botticelli's workshop.

Dóra Sallay, 2002.

Provenance

Simor Collection. Purchased from the Bertinelli estate in Rome in 1878



Restoration

1915 Endrődi Sebestyén

1974 Varga Dezső (hátoldal konzerválása)

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