

CALLISTO FINE ARTS

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Lavinia Fontana (Bologna, 1552 – Rome, 1614)

Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine

Oil on copper, 48.5 x 33.6 cm

Signed "LAVI. FON. FACI"

Bearing the number "576" on the back of the copper plate

This unpublished painting is an exceptional discovery, a major addition to the catalogue of Lavinia Fontana.

Maria Teresa Cantaro, author of one of the monographs on the painter, has confirmed the attribution and dedicated an accurate study to this copper. In her opinion, because of the type of signature used, the painting should date to before 1577, the year of Lavinia's marriage to Giampaolo Zappi.

Vera Fortunati will publish this work as autograph in her forthcoming book on Lavinia Fontana.

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The painting is particularly important because it sheds light on the early career of Lavinia Fontana. In it, there are clear signs of the influence of his father Prospero, especially in the structure of the composition, in the choice of architectural setting, and in the landscape. At the same time, though, the use of colour and the fresh naturalism reflect the work of her Bolognese contemporaries, the Carracci.

Within the oeuvre of Lavinia Fontana, copper is often used for precious works destined to the private religious use of sophisticated patrons.

Paintings on copper were very appreciated for the specific light effects that the interaction between colours and the reddish flat support can create, and for their durability.