

**KARL&FABER**

**Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn      Lot 292**

Adam and Eve



Low estimate :

High estimate :

Buyers premium incl. VAT :

EUR 80,000.00

EUR 100,000.00

27 %

**Artist**

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

**Additional description**

Etching on laid paper, watermark fragment Strasbourg Lily (Hinterding E'.c.a.). (1638). 16.4 x 11.7 cm (sheet).

**Period**

(1606 Leiden - Amsterdam 1669)

**Technique**

Druckgrafik

**Provenance**

Emile-Louis Galichon (1829-1875), Paris, verso with the collector's stamp (Lugt 1058) (2).

A very fine, strong lifetime impression of the second state, with touches of burr on Adam's and Eve's faces. With the smudge on Eve's nose, and no wear on Eve's groin, characteristic of the earliest impression. The outline of the bank behind Adam is now continuous and strengthened. Hinterding dates the watermark, the Strasbourg Lily, to around 1638. The first edition of the second (final) state was printed on paper bearing this watermark (Erik Hinterding, *The New Hollstein 168*, Vol. II, Text, p. 27). This impression is therefore an early pull, a conclusion also supported by the superb quality of the print. Such fine impressions are rare, as the plate was lost early on. Nowell-Usticke rated it 'RR' (very rare). The scene of the Fall of Man is the only depiction of Adam and Eve in Rembrandt's graphic oeuvre.

Stylistically, the print belongs to the artist's early period. Unlike the idealised Renaissance tradition, Rembrandt renders the first humans in a strikingly lifelike and unidealised manner, with natural body forms and expressive, almost caricatured facial features. Adam reaches hesitantly for the forbidden fruit, while simultaneously raising his right hand in a gesture of warning—as if still trying to dissuade Eve and remind her of the divine commandment. That both will ultimately succumb to temptation is due to the whisperings of the serpent, shown here as a dragon-like creature descending from the Tree of Knowledge, observing the effect of its persuasion. Formally, Rembrandt's grotesque dragon was likely inspired by Dürer's monster in the engraving *Christ in Limbo*. The trumpeting elephant in the background—a figure Rembrandt was able to render convincingly based on firsthand observation—is intended as a symbolic counterpoint to the serpent, traditionally associated with virtue. Thread margins or cut on the platemark.

– Minor foxing on the reverse. A tiny pin-hole on Eve's left thigh, barely perceptible to the naked eye. The lower left corner professionally reinforced with thin Japanese tissue on recto. Otherwise in very good condition. Very rare!

