

A painting by Il Morazzone worth £2 million at risk of leaving UK

- Export bar is to allow time for a UK gallery or institution to acquire the painting
- Painting is the only known surviving self-portrait by the Lombard baroque painter and shows the artist both as a painter and a knight

Self-Portrait as a Knight, with a horse, an easel with painter's palette and a page' by Pier Francesco Mazzucchelli, also known as 'il Morazzone', is at risk of leaving the country unless a buyer can be found.

The painting is an example of Lombard art, which has its origins in Lombardy in northern Italy during the early 17th century and remains a relatively unexplored field in art history. The style combines natural realism with intense spirituality and piety.

A work by il Morazzone is rare outside of northern Italy and this painting was presumed lost until its appearance on the London art market in 2020. A departure from the UK of this newly discovered self-portrait would amount to a significant loss.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

There are no significant self-portraits by il Morazzone in any public collections in the UK, so this painting is a rare treasure. I hope that a buyer comes forward so that it can be studied and admired in this country.

The Minister's decision follows the advice of the [Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest](#). The Committee agreed that this is an extraordinary and rare work from an important school of Italian painting notably absent from UK collections and the significance of this being il Morazzone's only known self-portrait. As such, they agreed that the painting held importance for research into the social status of painters in 17th century Lombardy.

Committee Member Professor Mark Hallett said:

This is an unusually complex and fascinating picture that cries out for further research and analysis, both as a self-portrait of an important painter from the period, and as a work that illuminates the wider social and cultural dynamics of the 17th century Lombardy art world.

The painting, which for many years was housed in an English family collection, also has the potential to provide new and important

perspectives on the collecting of Italian Baroque art in Britain.

The Committee made its recommendation on the grounds that the departure of the painting from the UK would be a misfortune owing to its outstanding significance for the study of Lombard painting during the baroque period.

The decision on the export licence application for the painting will be deferred for a period ending on 8th November 2022 inclusive. At the end of the first deferral period owners will have a consideration period of 15 Business Days to consider any offer(s) to purchase the painting at the recommended price of £2,000,000. The second deferral period will commence following the signing of an Option Agreement and will last for four months.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the painting should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.
2. Details of the painting are as follows:

Pier Francesco Mazzucchelli, called 'il Morazzone' (1573–1626)

Self-Portrait as a Knight, with a horse, an easel with painter's palette and a page, about 1605–10

Oil on canvas

78.6 x 59.3 cm

The painting has been recently cleaned and restored. The canvas was lined, perhaps in the late 19th or early 20th century. While the original tacking edges have been lost there is evidence of cusping at top and bottom, and although there is a narrow band of damage along the left vertical edge the overall format seems to be well preserved. Although there are no significant damages, there is evidence of wear in some of the darker areas – in the background, the man's hair, in the darker parts of his face and on his grey cloak – which is not unexpected in a painting of this date.

1. Provenance:

Diego Felípez de Guzmán y Dávila, 1st Marqués de Leganés (1580–1655), Madrid, by 1642;

Recorded in the Leganés collection, in Morata de Tajuña (south-east of Madrid), in 1655;

Collection of the counts of Altamira, Morata de Tajuña, by 1753;

[The picture presumably made its way from Spain to England in the late 18th or early 19th century];

Catherine Brooks (1853–1934), Flitwick Manor, Bedfordshire;

By whom left to her cousin, Robert Adolphus Lyall (1876–1948);

Thence by descent until offered for sale, Bonhams, London, 8 July 2020, lot 312 (as Circle of Gian Lorenzo Bernini), estimate £40-60,000 (withdrawn);

Purchased privately by the present owner.

1. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by the Arts Council (ACE), which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.
2. [Arts Council England](#) is the national development agency for creativity and culture. They have set out in their strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 they want England to be a country in which everyone's creativity is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. ACE invest public money from the Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

Following the [Covid-19 crisis](#), the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. They are also one of the bodies responsible for administering the Government's unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund.