

COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Elena Recco

(Naples c. 1654 – 1715 Madrid)

*Still life with fish and shells
upon a stone ledge before a
copper bowl*

oil on canvas

92.5 x 130.5 cm.;

36 3/8 x 51 3/8 in.

Provenance

Lord and Lady Rosse, Birr Castle, County Offaly, Ireland (by descent within the family at Birr Castle for several generations).

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Elena Recco was the daughter and pupil of Giuseppe Recco (1634 – 1695), the most celebrated Neapolitan still-life painter of his day. Elena emulated the naturalistic still-life arrangements of her father, excelling particularly in depictions of fish. The Birr Castle still lifes amply demonstrate Elena's skill, and are typical of her *oeuvre*, in the careful observation of light, colour and her broad and gestural brushwork that so beautifully emulates the textures different textures of her subjects – the scales of the fish, the sheen of the seashells, the saline skin of the squid. Her art, like that of her father's, is characterised by a Baroque sensibility, legible in the confident theatricality of the supple bending forms of the fish.

Both Birr Castle still lifes had previously been considered to be the work of Michele Pace (1610-1670), called Michelangelo del Campidoglio, whose name is born on the frame plaques, and then were later considered to be by Giuseppe Recco. It is only on the occasion of Colnaghi's exhibition *NAPLES* that the canvasses were identified as the work of Elena Recco. We are grateful to Riccardo Lattuada and Nicola Spinosa for each independently endorsing the attribution. For two comparable paintings by the artist, see F. Zeri, *et. al.*, *La Natura Morta in Italia*, vol. II, Milan 1989, p. 912, figs. 1101-2.