

COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Gabriel Franck
(Antwerp 1590 – 1638)

Christ with the Crown of Thorns

oil on oak panel

The verso stamped with the Antwerp hands
and the panel maker's mark of Guiliam Gabron

64,5 x 48,5 cm;

25 2/5 x 19 in.

Provenance

Private collection, Paris.

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This superbly executed painting on panel is an intimate devotional work by the little-known Antwerp based painter Gabriël Franck. The artist, active between 1605 and 1637, is known to have trained at least six apprentices and was dean of the Guild of St Luke. Franck specialized in religious scenes, and new research shows that his works were also in great demand in Spain due to its special relationship with Flanders. Masters such as Daniel Seghers also experienced great success there due to the high demand for devotional paintings. As part of this trade, many of Franck's works were commissioned and sold via the Flemish art dealers Guilliam Forchondt II, Maria de Fourmenstraux and Christophe van Immerseel, in whose correspondence he is mentioned between 1623 and 1643.

Typically, Franck preferred painting on copper, which proved ideal for transport to Spain due to its lightness and portability, although the artist is also known to have produced works on panel (such as the present one). The figure of Christ in this delicately painted work displays several distinctive features typical of Franck's style, most notably the large almond-shaped eyes, the oval face shape, pointed nose and small mouth. The smooth, almost enamelled appearance of the work testifies to the artist's steady hand. His works can be found in many Belgian churches, furthermore in the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam, the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Liège and the National Museum in Warsaw.

We are grateful to Dr. Bert Schepers of the Rubenianum (Antwerp) for confirming the attribution to Gabriel Franck.