

Basic Detail Report



The Contest of Apollo and Marsyas or Pan

Date

ca. 1545

Medium

oil on canvas

Description

The subject matter of this small painting is a musical contest between Apollo, the classical god of music and poetry, and another musician, either the satyr Marsyas or Pan. Apollo is the young man at the far right dressed in armor, with light emanating from his head alluding to his role as the sun god. He is depicted playing a lira da braccio, a bow-stringed instrument popular in the Renaissance. The seated figure holding a large set of pan-pipes is probably Pan, although he is depicted as an older man rather than as a satyr. The third figure from the left, seated in the middle of the spectators, is perhaps Timolus, the mountain god and judge of the contest. The figure at the far left may be King Midas who also witnessed the contest and contradicted Timolus' decision, thereby incurring the wrath of Apollo who turned his ears into those of an ass. This painting was formerly attributed to the Venetian artist, Jacopo Tintoretto (1519-1594), and was, for a period of time, titled The Judgment of Midas.

Dimensions

Sight: 8 x 20 1/8 in. (20.3 x 51.1 cm) Framed: 25 x 13 x 3 in. (63.5 x 33 x 7.6 cm)