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EST. 1817

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Angelika Kauffmann
(Chur 1741 - 1807 Rome)

Celadon and Amelia (Summer); and
Palemon and Lavinia (Autumn)

Oil on copper, oval

12 1/2 x 10 in. (31.8 x 25.4 cm.), each

Palemon and Lavinia inscribed, verso: 'WHITTOW & LARGE / SHOE LANE LONDON'

A pair

Painted *c.*1781

In gilded period frames each with an oval insert, laurel vine and pearl decoration, probably original and evidently made by the frame maker David Moss (active in London around 1790 - 1802). This is indicated by a label on another picture with the same frame from the same collection.

Provenance
(Possibly) Charles Taylor (1756–1823), engraver, London, commissioned from the artist ca. 1781; probably bequeathed to
G.W. Taylor, M.P., London, 1823
Hon. Robert Morgan-Grenville (1892–1988); his son
Robert Platagenet Morgan-Grenville (1916–1993)
Thence by descent, Kenya, until
Christie's, Paris, Maîtres Anciens: Peintures-Sculptures, Paris, 15 June 2023, lots 48 and 49.

Literary source
James Thomson, *The four seasons, and other poems*, London, 1735.

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Known as the 'female Raphael of art', the Swiss-born Angelika Kauffmann is regarded as the most successful and cultured female painter of the 18th century.

Primarily active in Italy and England, where she was a founding member of the Royal Academy, Kauffmann is the first woman artist to achieve international acclaim, attracting the patronage of cultural elites and nobles alike, from Goethe and Reynolds to Catherine II of Russia and King Ferdinand IV of Naples. Kauffmann was an excellent portraitist but what distinguished her was her singular commitment to subjects ranging from history, literature, mythology to religion; with few exceptions, notably Artemisia Gentileschi, women artists of the 16th and 17th centuries rarely ventured beyond portraiture and still life painting.

Angelika's originality lies in her ability to bring out the female protagonists in classical subjects, such as *Penelope at her Loom* (Brighton and Hove Museums and Art Galleries), subverting the traditional concept of male heroism in the story of the Odyssey. While it was portraiture that brought her wealth and prestige, she was keen to work with scenes and formats readily reproduced on furniture, textiles, ceramics, jewellery, as well as prints. With an existing oeuvre of around 800 paintings, 400 drawings and more than 600 prints made after her works, it is hard to overstate the extent of her productivity and popularity. As the Danish ambassador to London remarked in 1781: 'The whole world is Angelica-mad'.

Fluent in five languages and a virtuoso singer, Kauffman received an unusually broad, Classical education for a young woman of her time. Recognizing her gift early on, Kauffmann's father Joseph Johann Kauffmann, an artist from Austria, took her on a Grand Tour across Italy between 1758 and 1765. On this formative trip she absorbed the influence of Anton Raphael Mengs and Pompeo Batoni, making trend-setting portraits, among others, of English Grand Tourists such as John Parker (Saltram House, Plymouth), David Garrick (Burghley House, Samford) and the Marquis of Exeter. In Rome, age 22, her breakthrough came when she painted the antiquarian Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1764; Kunsthaus, Zürich). The informality and intimacy with which she captured an illustrious sitter like Wincklemann is what got her name out early on.

Soon after her success in Rome, Kauffmann settled in London for fifteen years from 1766-81, during which she achieved fame and fortune. She became a key player in the development of Neoclassical taste in Britain. Not surprisingly, most of her extant works in English collections are in country houses, such as Saltram in Devon that owns 11 of her works. In the 1770s, Kauffmann expanded her repertoire of Classical subjects to include scenes from British literature, such as 'Poor Maria' from Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768) (Burghley House

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Collection, Stamford). These allegorical subjects were typically painted on copper plates in small oval format, such as the present works. Adding to their immense popularity was the fact that prints were made after these works, sometimes even on porcelain and pendants, and circulated all over Europe. Towards the end of her stay in London, Kauffmann was celebrated as a 'living muse' in a group portrait of distinguished women, and she painted four ceilings in the Royal Academy's rooms at the New Somerset House. Her accomplishments are all the more significant, considering the drama in her personal life: she was tricked into marrying a bigamous phony aristocrat. Following a divorce, in 1781 she remarried Antonio Zucchi, a painter from Venice, and relocated to Rome the following year.

Besides a few sojourns in Naples, Kauffmann lived and worked in Rome until her death in 1807. She ran a salon out of her studio-residence near the Spanish Steps that attracted celebrity writers, artists and dignitaries from all over the world. Casting herself as the real-life embodiment of the *paragone* between music and painting, Kauffmann and her guests played instruments, sang, and read poetry aloud to each other, often improvised at these 'conversazione'. Kauffmann's artistic talents, combined with business acumen and a powerful network propelled her success into unprecedented realms for a woman artist. In the 1780s, she was the leading painter in Rome. Her late style looks at Guercino and Reni, but synthesizes elements of Roman, Venetian, French and English painting. Her art collection focused on 16th and 17th century paintings, such as those by Paris Bordone and Titian, in addition to works attributed to van Dyck, Veronese and Leonardo da Vinci.

By the early 20th century, Kauffmann's work had fallen out of fashion, as had Neoclassicism, and the reproduction of her work on furniture and decorative arts further detracted from the seriousness of her reputation. Although she never entirely fell out of favour, when the American art historian Anthony M. Clark published an essay on Kauffmann and Rome in 1968, interest in Kauffmann regained momentum in academic circles. Several recent exhibitions of Kauffmann in London, Germany and Switzerland have re-established her position in history.

We are grateful to Bettina Baumgärtel for the below catalogue entry:

James Thomson's poetry cycle *The Seasons* is part of a long tradition of pastoral poetry from Ovid to Torquato Tasso to Ariosto. Praised by leading figures of the European Enlightenment, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Ephraim Lessing, the opus, written between 1726 and 1730, was considered a key work of the period. The painterly-expressive depiction of the terrible and sublime in nature had an enormous impact on visual artists. Angelika Kauffmann, among them, was attracted by the wealth of

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imagery in the blank verse poem, which comprises five thousand lines, and she painted a further six scenes from Thomson's Seasons in addition to these two copper plate paintings.

As early as 1757, the first part of the poem was translated into German and published in Switzerland with a title vignette by Salomon Gessner. The second part followed in 1764 and a new edition in 1774. The Swiss born Kauffmann, who was in contact with Gessner, could have become acquainted with Thomson's *Seasons* in German translation early on. Linguistically gifted as she was, she would probably have read the Seasons in the original, if only to be able to grasp the musicality of the English verse. German translators, however, struggled to convey a sense of the original in their own language. In 1778, Ludewig Schubert made a second attempt with *Proben einer neuen Uebersetzung von James Thomson's 'Jahreszeiten'* (Samples of a new translation of James Thomson's 'Seasons') but had to admit that the 'picturesque poetry' of this 'greatest of the picturesque poets' quickly brought him to his linguistic limits (Neue Litteratur und Völkerkunde, No. 1, Vol. 1, January 1788, pp. 44–53).

Thus, it was the visual artists, including Angelika Kauffmann and Joshua Reynolds, who took on the mediating role of transforming Thomson's 'marvel of word music' into painting, appropriately since the Scottish poet in the line from Summer, 'But who can paint the lover, as he stood', openly calls for a contest between poetry and painting. Kauffmann, too, found herself challenged by Thomson's rhetorical question to a paragone of the arts.

The artist selects those scenes that would particularly stir the viewer's feelings. The moment of Amelia's tragic misfortune depicted here was ideally suited to move the 18th-century viewer; an innocent human being is unexpectedly snatched from the midst of life by the force of Nature. The loving Celadon is left inconsolable and in despair, 'for ever silent; and for ever sad'. Kauffmann's preoccupation with the fate of the lovers is depicted in another painting inspired by the same poem, in which she depicts the moment just before Amelia sinks to the ground, struck by lightning. In that work we see the profound fear of the tragic heroine, who clings to her lover in terror.

Thomson describes the climactic moment as follows:

> … From his void embrace,
> (Mysterious heaven!) that moment, in a heap

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Of pallid ashes fell the beauteous maid.
But who can paint the lover, as he stood,
Struck by severe amazement, hating life,
Speechless, and fix'd in all the death of woe!
So, faint resemblance, on the marbletomb,
The well-dissembl'd mourner stooping stands,
For ever silent, and for ever sad.

The pastoral scene with Palemon and Lavinia in the second picture must be read as a counterpoint to this. Lavinia, although of noble birth, has chosen to live simply and work in the fields. Palemon, the wealthy landowner of the corn field, becomes aware of the beautiful young woman who gracefully gathers ears of corn and he is immediately taken with her charms and eventually proposes to her. Palemon, is dressed in so-called Van Dyck costume with slashed sleeves, lace collar and cuffs and feather barrette. To ennoble and historicize her literary characters, Kauffmann uses this cavalier fashion, reminiscent of the 'Golden Age' of King Charles I and his famous court painter.

Describing the first meeting of the couple, Thomson writes:

… To walk, when poor Lavinia drew his eye;
Unconscious of her power, and turning quick
With unaffected blushes from his gaze.
He saw her charming, but he saw not half
The charms her downcast modesty conceal'd.
That very moment love and chaste desire
Sprung in his bosom, to himself unknown.

The encounter between the simple harvester and the rich landowner is reminiscent of traditional fairy tales and contains the hopeful message that the barriers between rich and poor can be overcome, with an intrinsic appeal to the sentimental sensibility of the time. The subject was treated by Edward Penny (Private Collection; fig. 1), exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1781, and by Henry Singleton (Tate Britain, London; fig. 2). Another composition was engraved by John Raphael Smith in 1780 (British Museum, London; fig. 3).

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The subject ultimately derives from the Old Testament story of Ruth and Boaz but would have resonated in 18th century England for different reasons. In 1773, the first enclosure act was passed; this removed the right of commoners' access to land deemed to be privately owned, contributing to serious agrarian unrest. This may account for the popularity of a depiction of a happy marriage between a wealthy landowner and a penniless gleaner. A later satirical print by James Gillray published in 1805 (National Portrait Gallery, London) shows a more lurid interpretation.

In addition to the specific appeal of Thomson's poem, there was a broader belief in the virtue of rural life. In English art, rural life, and also the poverty of the rural population, had for some time been elevated to a pictorial theme. Pastoral scenes with shepherdesses and peasant women were generally popular. Landscape painters such as Gainsborough and Moreland's picturesque take on country life illustrates this preoccupation, as does Stubbs whose scenes of Haymakers (Tate Britain, London) and Reapers (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven; fig. 4), painted in 1785 and 1795, convey the timeless dignity of working on the land. It is noteworthy that Stubbs himself adapted a passage from Thompson's Seasons (Spring) in his 1786 painting of two bulls locking horns (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven).

Angelika Kauffmann had a preference for coupled pictures in an oval or circular format. Here she conceives a pair of paintings that explain and complement each other and belong together both thematically and compositionally. Palemon and Lavinia, as an example of a happy loving couple, are juxtaposed with the tragic loving couple Celadon and Amelia. While in the first couple the tender beginning of a love in the making is depicted, the fate of the tragic couple reminds us of how suddenly and unexpectedly such a love can come to an end—thoughts of vanitas are suggested here.

The dimensions, copper support, oval format, literary subject matter, and paired structure invite comparison with another pair of paintings by Kauffmann, *Fame Decorating Shakespeare's Tomb* and *'Maria' from Sterne* (The Burghley House Collection, Lincolnshire; fig. 5). The *Maria* is taken from Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, a story of a shepherdess driven mad by love. In 1809, Kauffmann's biographer Joseph Moser described the cult generated by this picture thus: 'the strongest instance of a successful effort that, perhaps, was ever known, was displayed in the run of her beautiful picture of Sterne's *Maria*...The prints of it were circulated all over Europe. In the elegant manufactures of London, Birmingham &c. it assumed an incalculable variety of forms...from a watch-case to a tea-waiter.'

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The adaptation of Kauffmann's compositions by manufacturers of the decorative arts is a testament to her remarkable popularity and part of the phenomenon of her cult following all over Europe. The Danish ambassador Gottlieb Friedrich Ernst Graf Schönborn said at the time that 'the whole World is angelicamad' (sic). While the countless reproductions of her oval copper *Maria* were the most famous offshoots, one of her depictions of *Celadon and Amelia* found its way not only onto a Derby vase (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 825:1, 2-1882; fig. 6) but onto a mourning pendant made in the 1790s (Collection Sandro Jung; fig. 7).

At the same time, both *Celadon and Amelia* and *Palemon and Lavinia* represent two of the four seasons. The lightning struck Amelia with Celadon stands for summer, the harvesting Lavinia with Palemon for autumn. It is obvious that two different 'Modi' of painting between major and minor are addressed here, which had already been established in the 17th century with Nicolas Poussin, following musical theory: Palemon and Lavinia represent the mode of the arcadian, Celadon and Amelia the mode of the horrifyingly sublime.

The two oval copper paintings were long considered lost. Only recently did they reappear from a private Kenyan collection. Since The Hon. Robert Morgan-Grenville acquired these paintings, presumably at the beginning of the 20th century, they have been passed down within the family without interruption.

There is much to suggest that the engraver and publisher Charles Taylor was the original patron. He was always on the lookout for saleable merchandise to offer in his print shop at 8, Dyers Buildings, Holborn. Paintings by Kauffmann in combination with the accompanying reproductive prints were highly commercial at that time. In addition, Taylor was apparently planning a cabinet of pictures on great poets, as his newspaper advertisement suggests: 'Taylor Cabinet of Genius…With the Stories at large. Price Half a Guinea'. His first proofs after Kauffmann's paintings bear the date 1781, the finished plates the date 27 June 1782 (British Museum; figs. 8-9). The date of both paintings is therefore before or at the latest at the beginning of 1781 and thus at the height of Kauffmann's creative period in London.

Another clue is the engraved inscription 'WHITTOW & LARGE / SHOE LANE LONDON' on the reverse of the copper plate of *Palemon and Lavinia* (fig. 10). We know that Charles Taylor obtained his copper plates directly from the London copper plate makers Benjamin Whittow (active ca. 1705–1805) and Thomas Large (partner until 1774 and 1776–81). A letter from Isaac Taylor the Younger, brother of Charles Taylor, expresses how satisfied the Taylor brothers were with the quality of the copper plates from Whittow &

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Large (Gerald E. Bentley Jr., 'Blake's Heavy Metal. The History, Wheight, Uses, Cost, and Makers of His Copper Plates', in University of Toronto Quarterly, vol. 76, no. 2, Spring 2007, pp. 756f.). It stands to reason that Taylor left two of his copper plates to Kauffmann, as she too preferred to use Whittow & Large's stable copper plates for the best of her oval paintings that were particularly popular with the public of the time.

Fig. 1: Edward Penny, *Lavinia*, private collection

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Fig. 2: Henry Singleton, *Palemon and Lavinia*, Tate Britain.

Fig. 3: John Raphael Smith*, Palemon and Lavinia*, British Museum.

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Fig. 4: George Stubbs, *Reapers*, 1795, enamel on Wedgwood biscuit earthenware, 76.8 x 102.9 cm, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven. Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.618.

Fig. 5: Angelika Kauffmann, *'Maria' from Sterne*,
The Burghley House Collection, Lincolnshire

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Fig. 6: Derby Porcelain Factory, after Angelika Kauffmann, *Celadon and Amelia*, *c.*1789, V & A

Fig. 7: Mourning pendant, with sepia painting of *Celadon and Amelia*, *c.*1790, 7 x 4 cm. Collection Sandro Jung

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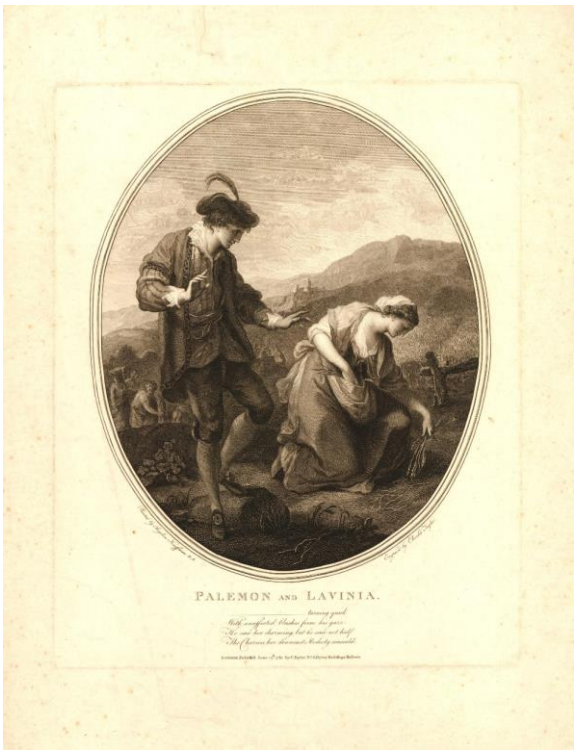

Fig. 8: Charles Taylor after Kauffmann, *Palemon and Lavinia*, British Museum

Fig. 9: Charles Taylor after Kauffmann, *Celadon and Amelia*, British Museum

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Fig. 10: reverse of the present picture