

Andrea Landini (1847-1935)

The surprise guest

Signed, lower right: *A. Landini*; also signed and inscribed, on a label attached to the stretcher:

Chambre à coucher de Marie Antoinette/à Fontainebleau/sujet: TAQUINERIE/A. Landini

Oil on canvas

24 x 29⅛ in – 61 x 74 cm

Frame size

30 x 35 in – 76.2 x 88.9 cm

Artist description:

Andrea Landini studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence under Professor Antonio Ciseri (1821-1891), a Swiss born painter of historical genre and portraits, and under Riccardo Pasquini (1849-1937), a portrait and figure painter who exhibited in Turin and Milan.

Landini concentrated on portrait painting, gaining a considerable reputation and numerous commissions amongst Florentine society, being noted for his detail, breadth and subtlety of colouring. Aside from his portraiture, Landini specialised in elegant genre works, titles including “Seduction” and “The Return”. In search of more lucrative commissions, Landini worked in Paris and Rome adopting the specific genre of cardinal painting, a genre that came to be dominated by Landini in Rome, together with Georges Croegaert (1848-1927), François Brunery (1849-1926), Jean Vibert (1840-1902) and José Frappa (1854-1904) in Paris. It was a genre that was of widespread appeal with its humorous mockery of the lavish and luxurious lifestyle popularly considered to be led by the Catholic Church and the whiff of hypocrisy exposed in paintings of cardinals studying licentious material concealed within a serious tome or surreptitiously imbibing strong liquor. The commercial success of such paintings was due in no small part to the economic prosperity on a previously unknown scale seen in the last decades of the nineteenth century in Europe and the United States. The burgeoning middle class, the rise of mammon and a lessening in regard for the church contributed to this surge in popularity.

Landini’s highly finished technique lent itself to the portrayal of these lavish scenes with the ornate furnishings of tapestries, ormolu and marquetry furniture, the glass and silverware, the lacework of

tablecloths and the rich hues of the cardinals' costumes and in these and the more intimate works, his talent for portraiture is evident. Landini worked and exhibited in Florence, Paris and Rome, his last exhibit being in 1911 at the Societé des Artistes Française in Paris.