

# KLAAS MULLER

M A A R T E N   V A N   C L E V E

## Couple with a Spindle and a Hen

In this painting, Marten van Cleve takes up the motif of the "hen toucher", which is widespread in Netherlandish art. However, the farmer is not worried about his hen's unlaied eggs. The interpretation of the content of the depiction as a coarse and crude eroticisation typical of the period is derived from an inscribed copperplate engraving of the same subject: the farmer has noticed that the hen is "locked". In response, the farmer's wife holds the spindle out to him (see K. Ertz/Nitze-Ertz, Marten van Cleve, 1524-1581. Kritischer Katalog der Gemälde und Zeichnungen. Flämische Maler im Umkreis der Großen Meister, vol. 9, Lingen 2014, fig. 100).

Klaus Ertz has confirmed the painting as a work by Marten van Cleve and dates it to the 1570s. The expressive faces, which have the character of portraits, are typical. According to Ertz, comparable types can be found, for example, in wedding subjects (cf. K. Ertz, o. cit., cat. 124-180) or portraits (ibid., cat. 181-187). Pieter Brueghel the Younger drew on Cleves' inventions in some of his paintings (cf. K. Ertz, op. cit., p. 73).

Certificate Klaus Ertz, Lingen, 14.2.2022

oil on panel, 22 x 30,2cm

