

BLUMKA



Ferdinand TIETZ

Holešice, Bohemia, in 1708; died 1777 in Seehof near Bamberg, Germany

Ceres, Allegory of Summer

Germany

Circa 1760

Bozzetto, linden wood with the original polychromy to imitate sandstone

Height: 30 cm

Provenance:

Jacques Kugel, circa since the 1960s; By descent.

Comparative literature:

Bernd Wolfgang LINDEMANN, *Ferdinand Tietz 1708–1777*, Weißenhorn 1989, cf. fig. 14 (Allegory of Summer), 109 (Pan), 342 (Mercury)

Die Bozzetti-Sammlung – Kleinbildwerke des 18. Jahrhunderts im Mainfränkischen Museum Würzburg, edited by Hans-Peter TRENSCHEL, Würzburg 1987

Not far from Bamberg is the former summer residence of the prince-bishops, the beautiful palace known as Schloss Seehof. It is an impressive testimony to the once so impressive court upheld by the bishopric and, at the same time, it is the artistic legacy of one of the greatest Rococo artists of southern Germany, Ferdinand Tietz, who originally came from Bohemia.

Born in Holešice in 1708, as Ferdinand Dietz, he later changed the spelling of his surname to 'Tietz'. He came from a family of craftsmen; his father was a sculptor and had a workshop in Jezeří. Although Ferdinand was later to become a successful sculptor there is no documentary evidence covering the first third of the artist's lifetime. He most probably went to Vienna where he met the sculptor Johann Wolfgang von der Auwera (1708–1756), as stylistic parallels reveal. It is not until 1736, when he was twenty-eight years old, that the artist is mentioned in archival records. He worked under Balthasar Neumann (1687–1753) on large projects in the Würzburg Residenz, as shown on various invoices. In 1747 Tietz was summoned to Bamberg by Prince-Bishop Johann Philipp Anton von Franckenstein (1695–1753) who commissioned him to devise a comprehensive plan of figures for the park at Schloss Seehof. This project represents the highlight of the park's overall design and Tietz's artistic breakthrough. Together with his workshop, Tietz – who was appointed court sculptor in 1748 – completed some 400 masterly worked and powerfully modelled sculptures of playfully exuberant figures captured in motion. They were to make the artist famous well beyond the region.¹

In 1754 Tietz was called to Trier by the prince-bishop Franz Georg von Schönborn (1682–1756) and did not return to Bamberg until 1760 where, in the meantime, Adam Friedrich von Seinsheim (1708–1779), Prince-Bishop of Würzburg, had taken over the prince-bishopric office in Bamberg as well, as the position had become vacant.

In 1765 Seinsheim commissioned Tietz to submit new designs for the court garden at Veitshöchheim near Würzburg. To accompany the architectural plans he devised a comprehensive sculptural agenda. The court sculptor made a major contribution to peopling the garden with allegorical stone figures from mythology between 1765 and 1768. Upon completion in 1776, some 300 figures decorated the garden, of which some 200 have survived. They were originally painted *à la porcelaine*² that would certainly have made an impressive sight.

In 1767 Ferdinand Tietz was also appointed court sculptor in Würzburg. However, after completing his commissions for Würzburg and Bamberg he did not receive any further work of note. His playful style reflecting the *zeitgeist* of the Rococo period was no longer in keeping with the increasingly sober and seemingly harsh lines of emerging art tastes. Tietz died in 1777 at the age of 69 in Seehof near Bamberg.

¹ Today, only a small number of figures are to be seen.

² Painted *à la porcelaine*, the stone sculptures would have had the appearance of painted china figures.



Our figurative group is a so-called *bozzetto*, a small sculptural work made of linden wood used as a model that would have been presented to the patron who gave the commission, presumably Adam Friedrich von Seinsheim, before work started on the large sculpture in stone.

A youthful-looking, nude woman is depicted in a dynamic pose standing on an octagonal pedestal with sweeping concave curves and a central floral relief. A small putto and woman in peasant's garb kneeling at her feet proffering a sheaf of grain, form her entourage. The ripe corn is an attribute of the Roman goddess Ceres and reveals the sensual beauty as an allegory of summer.



Allegory of Summer, h. 175 cm, w. 113 cm, d. 65 cm
 Veitshöchheim, 1765/67
 B.W. Lindemann, *Ferdinand Tietz*, fig. 15, p. 33

The *bozzetto* was the model for a garden figure and was most probably once painted³. It is similar to an allegory of summer that Tietz made in 1765/67 for the court garden at Veitshöchheim in which the motif of the kneeling peasant woman with a gift of grain also appears. The small putto, however, is not included and the goddess is clothed. The virtuosity and dynamism of the small sculpted work are lacking; instead, the garden figure exudes a calm majesty. In the case of the garden figure Tietz also eschewed the sensually erotic aesthetic and gleeful exuberance that characterize the *bozzetto*, presumably at the request of the patron. The *bozzetto* serves to explain the work's formal artistic language.

The extreme rotation of Ceres' body in the *bozzetto* and the crossing of her legs as if dancing, can similarly be found in the figure of Pan. The god of shepherds was one of the figures in Tietz's cycle of gods that he made in 1760 for the Rose Garden in Bamberg.

Pan, Bamberg, 1760/61, showing the figure in 1968; today, only the torso has survived. Private collection
 B.W. Lindemann, *Ferdinand Tietz*, fig. 109, p. 109



³ Hans-Peter Trenchel, the former director of the Mainfränkisches Museum in Würzburg emphasises that, in Tietz's case, sketches did not play a role in the creative process of a sculpture. Instead, he generally carved small wooden figures immediately before, in preparation for his work on the stone figures (F. Tietz Symposium, Bamberg, 2008).



The depiction of Mercury, the messenger of the gods, shows formal overlaps with the small sculpture, for example in the twisted posture of the body and the immediacy of the dance-like movement.

Mercury, h. 130 cm, Bamberg, 1760/61
B.W. Lindemann, *Ferdinand Tietz*, fig. 342

Due to the work's high artistic quality and taking stylistic comparisons into consideration we assume that this *bozzetto* is a work by Ferdinand Tietz himself. In all probability, the Ceres group served as a model for the Allegory of Summer in the garden at Veitshöchheim.

