

	Object: Allegory of Beauty Museum: Kunsthalle Bremen Am Wall 207 28195 Bremen (04 21) 3 29 08-0 info@kunsthalle-bremen.de Collection: Alte Meister, Gemälde und Skulpturen Inventory number: 1192-1977/1
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Description

The Gandolfi family maintained one of the leading painting workshops in 18th-century Bologna. Gaetano Gandolfi created these oval companion pieces for the Buratti family, who kept them in their palace on the Piazza San Martino. The first painting is an allegory of beauty featuring a young couple adorned with floral wreathes. The young man leans on a harp, alluding to the peaceful and poetic Arcadia of shepherd idylls and music. At the same time, he holds up a mirror to the young woman so that she may admire her coral necklace. As an attribute of Prudentia (wisdom, self-knowledge), the mirror may also indicate that both are aware of the danger inherent in beauty. In contrast to the pair in love, the wealthy middle-aged couple is portrayed as turning away from each other. Like their magnificent clothing and jewelry, the horse and the hunting hound also serve as an indication of their high standing. The woman holds up a golden drinking bowl, while the man empties a purse of coins, allowing the money literally to flow through his hands, by which Gandolfi explicitly warns against extravagance and alludes to the transience of earthly possessions. Since these works were originally part of a series of four paintings depicting the seasons, two of which have now been lost, it cannot be ruled out that the Bremen pictures illustrate the spring and the autumn of a human life.

Basic data

Material/Technique:	Oil on canvas with earthen red/brown ground, lined
Measurements:	94.5 x 76.5 cm

Events

Painted	When	1779
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Who Gaetano Gandolfi (1734-1802)
Where

Keywords

- Allegory
- Harp
- Liebespaar
- Mirror
- Painting
- jewellery