

**ANGELICA KAUFFMAN**

1741–1807

**HEBE**

Oil on canvas

50 7/8 x 40 3/8 inches; 1294 x 1026 mm

Painted c.1801



Collections:

Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807), Rome;

Listed in the posthumous inventory of Angelica Kauffman's Roman studio made in 1808:

'Un Qua[d]ro in tela d'Imperatore per alto rappresentante Eda [sic] con Giove trasformato in Aquila';

Johann Kauffmann (1751–1829), cousin of the above, Rome;

Listed in the posthumous inventory of Johann Kauffmann's Roman apartment made in 1829:

'Un Quadro di misura d'Imperatore per alto rappresentante Ebbe senza cornice';

Johann Kauffmann (1781–1873), nephew of the above;

Maria Magdalena Vogler-Bächler (1804–1851), acquired from the Kauffmann family c.1830;

Albertine Vogler-Sallmann (1850–1929), daughter of the above;

Alfred Ernst Sallmann (1888–1970), son of the above;

Galerie Fischer, Lucerne 6–9 June 1945, lot 1615, unsold;

Sallmann family until 2025;

Lowell Libson and Jonny Yarker Ltd. acquired from the above through H.W. Fichter

Kunsthandel, Frankfurt.

Literature:

Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, *Papers relating to the estates of Johann Kaufmann and Angelica Kauffman*, acc. no. 890237, Filippo Romagnoli, *Descrizione di tutto ciò, che vi è rinvenuto nell'Abitazione ritenuta dalla defonta Angelica Koffman [sic] e chè come spettante all'Eredità della Medesima*, p.47;

Johann Christian Reinhardt, *Almanach aus Rom für Künstler und Freunde der Bildenden Kunst*, Leipzig, 1810, p.151;

Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, *Papers relating to the estates of Johann Kaufmann and Angelica Kauffman*, acc. no. 890237, *Inventory of Via San Nicolo Tolentino 47, 1829*, pp.41-42;

Walter Hugelshofer, *Angelika Kauffmann*, exh. cat. Chur (Bündner Museum), 1941, no.19;

ed. Elisabeth von Gleichenstein, “... und hat als Weib unglaubliches Talent” (Goethe). *Angelika Kauffmann (1741–1807) und Marie Ellenrieder (1791–1863), Malerei und Graphik*, exh. cat. Konstanz (Rosgartenmuseum), 1992, p. 158, no. 21, colour repr. 10; ed. by Bärbel Kovalevski, *Zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit. Künstlerinnen der Goethe-Zeit zwischen 1750 und 1850*, exh. cat. Gotha and Konstanz (Schlossmuseum Gotha and Rosgartenmuseum Konstanz), 1999, p. 152, no. E 32, repr.; Bettina Baumgärtel, *Angelika Kauffmann*, exh. cat. Düsseldorf, München and Chur (Kunstmuseum, Haus der Kunst and Bündner Museum), 1999, p. 96 and p. 435; ed. Bettina Baumgärtel, *Angelika Kauffmann. Unbekannte Schätze aus Vorarlberger Privatsammlungen*, Munich, 2018, p. 152, at no. 77, Illus. 61.

Exhibited:

Chur, Bündner Museum, *Angelika Kauffmann*, 1941, no. 19; Konstanz, Rosgartenmuseum, “... und hat als Weib unglaubliches Talent” (Goethe). *Angelika Kauffmann (1741–1807) und Marie Ellenrieder (1791–1863), Malerei und Graphik*, 1992, no. 21; Gotha, Schlossmuseum and Konstanz, Rosgartenmuseum, *Zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit. Künstlerinnen der Goethe-Zeit zwischen 1750 und 1850*, 1999, no. E 32; Constance, Rosgarten Museum, long term loan, inv. no. L 3.

This imposing late painting by Angelica Kauffman is a powerful work of European neo-classicism, demonstrating Kauffman's inventiveness as a designer and facility as a painter. Left unfinished in Kauffman's Roman studio at her death, where it is first recorded in a posthumous inventory, this important work is little known, having remained in the same family collection since the mid-nineteenth century.

By her death in 1807 Kauffman was celebrated as one of the leading painters in Europe. Kauffman had achieved considerable success in Britain, exhibiting extensively at the Royal Academy of which she was a founder member. Born in Chur, Switzerland, the only child of the Austrian painter Johann Joseph Kauffman, in 1742 Kauffman's father moved his family to Italy where, her early biographers record that she rapidly distinguished herself as a prodigy of both music and art.<sup>1</sup> Kauffman decided to pursue a career as a painter and undertook a formal Grand Tour of Italy in 1759 before settling in Rome in 1763. There she was introduced into a circle of British neo-classical painters including Gavin Hamilton, Nathaniel Dance and Benjamin West. These contacts undoubtedly influenced her aspiration to create history paintings of classical, mythological and religious subjects, a rare ambition for a female artist at this date. Encouraged by her contacts with Anglo-Saxon painters, Kauffman travelled to London in 1766 where she met and was befriended by Joshua Reynolds who became

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<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Gherardo De Rossi, *Vita di Angelica Kauffmann Pittrice*, Florence, 1810, pp. 16–17.

instrumental in promoting her career. In London she established a profitable and celebrated portrait practice working for a fashionable clientele. But, as Wendy Wassyng Roworth has observed: 'Kauffman was not able to achieve fully her high aspiration to produce large-scale history paintings.'<sup>2</sup>

In 1782 Kauffman returned to Rome after marrying the Italian decorative painter Antonio Zucchi, who yielded his own career to manage his spouse's finances. Economics partly motivated their move, Meng's recent death and Batoni's slowing career were to position Kauffman as Rome's dominant portraitist, decisively secured by the 1783 commission to paint the Neapolitan royal family. Moreover, the explosion of the Grand Tour among the nobility of northern and eastern Europe opened vast new markets for the multilingual painter. Kauffman and Zucchi occupied grand quarters on via Sistina, formerly the studio of Mengs, at the top of the Spanish Steps. Kauffman therefore cast herself as the prime heir to the classicising tradition of Roman painting. But most importantly the return to Rome situated Kauffman at the creative centre of Europe in close proximity to the greatest collections of antiquities and old master paintings as well as a thriving, international community of painters. Re-established in Rome she could finally execute the ambitious historical compositions that she had been contemplating since the 1760s. With this in mind, Kauffman not only assembled an important collection of antiquities and modern paintings in her studio, but organised her well-known weekly *conversazioni*. These semi-public events brought together the cosmopolitan literary and artistic figures of late Settecento Rome, something that impacted on the expanding erudition of Kauffman's late work.<sup>3</sup> Kauffman's return to Italy was celebrated in verse by Ippolito Pindemonte in his epistle *Alla Signora Angelica Kauffmann dipintrice celeberrima a Roma*, which he published under the name Polidete Melpomenio. The poem describes how Minerva led Kauffman back to Rome to be a history painter.

The subject of *Hebe: The Cupbearer* emerged in the mid-eighteenth century as one of the key iconographical vehicles for neo-classicism: both as a guise for elite female portraiture and a subject in itself. Fashionable women were regularly shown dressed as Hebe, holding an ewer and feeding Zeus in the form of an eagle. It was a trend which encompassed artists as diverse as Jean-Marc Nattier and François-Hubert Drouais who depicted Marie-Antoinette as Hebe in a painting now in the Musée Condé in Chantilly. In Britain the conceit was used by Kauffman's mentor Joshua Reynolds in his monumental portrait of *Mrs Musters*, now in the

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<sup>2</sup> Wendy Wassyng Roworth, 'Between 'Old Tiber' and 'Envious Thames': The Angelica Kauffman Connection', in eds. David Marshall, Susan Russell and Karin Wolfe, *Roma Britannica: Art Patronage and Cultural Exchange in Eighteenth-Century Rome*, London, 2011, p.294.

<sup>3</sup> 'Wendy Wassyng Roworth, 'The Residence of the Arts': Angelica Kauffman's place in Rome', in eds. Paula Findlen, Wendy Wassyng Roworth and Catherine M. Sama, *Italy's Eighteenth Century*, Stanford, 2009, pp.151-171.

Iveagh Bequest at Kenwood House and by George Romney in his portrait of *Elizabeth Warren, Viscountess Bulkeley* at the National Museum, Cardiff. Kauffman similarly explored the idea of showing sitters in the guise of antique deities or personifications, even using the guise of Hebe. But Kauffman was also interested in Hebe as a subject for a historical canvas.

In Greek mythology Hebe was the daughter of Zeus and Hera, the divine wife of Hercules and was associated with eternal youth, with the ability to restore youth to mortals.

According to Philostratus, Hebe was the youngest of the gods and the one responsible for keeping them eternally young. As early as 1770 Kauffman produced a pair of etching and aquatint prints of *Juno* and *Hebe*. The print shows Hebe pouring nectar or ambrosia into a dish for Zeus in the guise of an eagle, who is shown perched on an altar decorated with bucrania and swags. The print, published when Kauffman was in London, shows awareness of a design of the same subject published by Domenico Cunego in Rome in 1767. Cunego was reproducing a painting by Kauffman's friend and artistic mentor Gavin Hamilton. Hamilton's painting of *Hebe*, which similarly shows the goddess seated in profile feeding Zeus, had been painted in around 1765 and was similarly paired with a depiction of Juno. The first version of Hamilton's composition had been acquired by one of Kauffman's earliest and most important patrons Brownlow Cecil, 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Exeter it was therefore a painting she would have known intimately and suggests it was a subject-matter being discussed whilst she was in Rome in the 1760s.<sup>4</sup>



Angelica Kauffman  
*Hebe and the Eagle*  
Etching  
8 1/4 x 6 1/2 inches; 210 x 164 mm  
Made in 1770  
© The Trustees of the British Museum

Hamilton specialised in producing paintings of single-figure female personifications and historical heroines. In the late 1770s Hamilton painted two seated female figures embodying *Painting* and *Poetry* acquired by the British diplomat Sir William Hamilton, the paintings are now known only from a pair of engravings made in Rome by Raphael Morghen. Hamilton's works show the influence of seventeenth-century models, particularly the great depictions of Sibyls by Guercino and Domenichino in the Capitoline in Rome. Although no longer extant,

<sup>4</sup> Françoise Forster-Hahn, 'After Guercino or After the Greeks? Gavin Hamilton's Hebe: Tradition and Change in the 1760s', *The Burlington Magazine*, June 1975, vol.117, no.867, pp.364-371.

these works, which would have been well known to Kauffman, offer important context for her own single-figure female deities and personifications showing both the veneration for seicento models and the enduring influence of Anton Raphael Mengs. Morghen was part of Kauffman's inner circle in Rome, engraving many of her works and marrying Domenica, the daughter of Giovanni Volpato and the subject of one of Kauffman's most spectacular late portraits. At the same moment, Kauffman was painting her ambitious depiction of Emma, Lady Hamilton as the Muse of Comedy.



Domenico Cunego after Gavin Hamilton  
*Hebe*  
Engraving  
15 ½ x 11 ¼ inches; 397 x 287 mm  
© The Trustees of the British Museum

Kauffman maintained an interest in the subject-matter of Hebe producing a small oval painting which was engraved by Francesco Bartolozzi in 1782. Inscribed as being in the possession of the British consul in Livorno, Sir John Dick, Kauffman's painting shows a more decorative treatment of the subject.



Francesco Bartolozzi  
*Hebe*  
Mezzotint and etching  
11 7/16 x 9 1/16 inches; 290 x 230 mm  
Made in 1782  
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection,  
B1978.43.560.

In the present painting Kauffman makes a decisive move towards something more monumental and rigorously classical. In this painting Kauffman shows Hebe three-quarter length, seated in profile, dressed in a simple white peplos secured over the left shoulder, she is shown cradling a lekythos and feeding Zeus in the form of an eagle. The exquisitely painted figure represents Kauffman's female archetype with her straight nose, full lips and regular features, which were inspired by antique models. The head is modelled on the profile of an antique bust of Agrippina in the Capitoline Kauffman had first observed in Rome in the 1760s and appear in various variations throughout her most ambitious late works.



Angelica Kauffman  
*Page from a sketch book:*  
*No. 136 Idealised head of a woman*  
Black Chalk  
11 1/4 x 14 1/2 inches; 280 x 368 mm  
Drawn 1762-1766  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Detail from Angelica Kauffman  
*Virgil writing his Epitaph at Brundisi*  
Oil on canvas  
39 x 49 1/2 inches; 991 x 1257 mm  
Painted in 1785  
Carnegie Museum of Art  
Formerly with Lowell Libson and Jonny Yarker Ltd

Kauffman's first design for this composition, preserved in a preparatory drawing now in a private collection, shows that she refined her original idea. In the drawing, Zeus is shown as a larger bird, wing outstretched behind Hebe. In the final painting, Kauffman reduces the size of the eagle, producing a bird which is closer in form to antique prototypes whilst retaining a degree of naturalism. Kauffman's friend and patron, Sir William Hamilton owned a celebrated ancient statue of an eagle which he eventually presented to the British Museum.

Kauffman must have been aware of the proliferation of artists treating Hebe as a subject in Rome in the last decade of the eighteenth century and this painting can be read, in part, as a response to these other works. In 1792 Élisabeth Vigée le Brun painted a portrait of Anne Pitt the daughter of Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford in the guise of Hebe. As Le Brun noted in her memoirs, the sitter: 'was sixteen and extremely pretty. I represented her as Hebe, on some clouds, holding in her hand a goblet from which an eagle was about to drink. I did the eagle from life, and I thought he would eat me. He belonged to Cardinal de Bernis. The wretched beast, accustomed to being in the open air – for he was kept on a chain in the courtyard – was so enraged at finding himself in my room that he tried to fly at me. I admit that I was dreadfully frightened.'<sup>5</sup> Le Brun arranged the sitter in a pose loosely based on Kauffman's own *Self-Portrait* of 1787 which she had recently admired in Florence. In 1795 Antonio Canova completed his figure of *Hebe* for the Venetian aristocrat Giuseppe Giacomo Albrizzi which imagines the goddess as the personification of youthful grace, floating on a cloud and carrying a gilt bronze ewer and cup. Canova's design was hugely celebrated by contemporaries resulting in at least four autograph versions. Kauffman's canvas was probably conceived around 1800, she combines the seated pose of Le Brun's *Hebe* with the gilt ewer and cup from Canova but produces a painting of total originality. Kauffman's Hebe is no frail maiden, she is a substantially composed figure, intent in her role as cupbearer of the gods. Kauffman conceives of Hebe as a manifestation of youthful, maidenly virtue and beauty, robed in vestal white, her hair dressed with a beautiful garland of flowers. Hebe was emblematic of eternal youth, and it is notable that she should have been chosen as a subject by the aging artist. Painted in Rome, this grand work can be read as a summation of Kauffman's singular neo-classical vision. The costumes, style and approach to the composition recall Kauffman's interest in a specific lineage of Roman painting from Raphael, through Guido Reni to Anton Raphael Mengs. Kauffman never outlined a theoretical position in print. However, the artist's biographer de Rossi, described the artist as 'la Pittrice delle Grazie'. In eighteenth-century terms, grace embodied the reason, erudition, judgment, and balance of her painting, aspects reinforced by her rational, learned, and virtuous personality.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ed. Lionel Strachey, *Memoirs of Madame Vigée Le Brun*, New York, 1903, p.57.

<sup>6</sup> Giovanni Gherardo de Rossi writing in *Memorie per le belle Arti*, April 1785, p.LIV.

## Provenance

This painting remained unfinished in Kauffmann's studio at her death in November 1807. The painting is first mentioned by the painter Johann Christian Reinhardt in his *Almanach aus Rom*. After describing Kauffmann's funeral procession to Sant'Andrea delle Fratte, Reinhardt lists 'a few of the finest works' left in her studio and available for sale, number 10 on the list is: 'Hebe und Jupiters Adler. Halbe Figur. Unvolendet.'<sup>7</sup> Its presence in Kauffmann's studio at the time of her death is corroborated by the inventory of her estate made by the Roman notary Filippo Romagnoli made over several days in 1808. The 'Descrizione di tutto ciò, che vi è rinvenuto nell'Abitazione ritenuta dalla defonta Angelica Koffman [sic] e chè come spettante all'Eredità della Medesima' lists her entire household with furniture and other furnishings on 47 unpaginated pages. The Hebe is listed in her studio: 'Un Qua[d]ro in tela d'Imperatore per alto rappresentante Eda [sic] con Giove trasformato in Aquila – 120.'<sup>8</sup>

Kauffmann's heir was her first cousin, the printseller Johann Kauffmann who had lived with her in Rome since 1792.<sup>9</sup> In her will, drawn up in 1803, Kauffmann stated: 'I am leaving the paintings that will be in my study at the time of my death to my cousin Johann Kaufmann in order to sell them as best as possible and then to share the proceeds with his brother Kasimir or one of his most needy sisters, if he so wishes.'<sup>10</sup> Shortly after Kauffmann's death, Johann offered a collection of her paintings to Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria through his agent, the painter Friedrich Müller. Ludwig had sat to Kauffmann in 1807 for a spectacular full-length portrait now in the Neue Pinakothek in Munich. Amongst the works offered to Ludwig in January 1808 was:

'5. Hebe welche den Adler des Jupiters füttert, beynahe lebensgrß, doch nicht völlig vollendet.'<sup>11</sup>

Ludwig declined to purchase the painting. Müller tried again in March 1810 offering the Hebe at the discounted price of 60 sequins.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Johann Christian Reinhardt, *Almanach aus Rom für Künstler und Freunde der Bildenden Kunst*, Leipzig, 1810, p.151

<sup>8</sup> Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, Papers relating to the estates of Johann Kaufmann and Angelica Kauffmann, acc. no. 890237, Filippo Romagnoli, *Descrizione di tutto ciò, che vi è rinvenuto nell'Abitazione ritenuta dalla defonta Angelica Koffman [sic] e chè come spettante all'Eredità della Medesima*, 1808, p.47.

<sup>9</sup> Johann Kauffmann (1751-1829) has sometimes been confused with the Austrian sculptor Johann Peter Kauffmann (1764-1829) a distant relative who also practiced in Rome. See Wendy Wassung Roworth, 'The Angelica Kauffmann inventories: An Artist's Property and Legacy in Early Nineteenth-century Rome,' *Getty Research Journal*, no.7 (January 2015), p.161.

<sup>10</sup> Franz Gebhard Metzler, 'Angelika Kauffmann, Skizze mit Testament der Angelica Kaufmann welches dieselbe den 17. Juni 1803 in italienischer Sprache sigillirter in die Acten des Herrn Bartolo römischen Notars abgegeben hat', in *Vorarlberger Volkskalender* 57, Bregenz 1907, p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> Bettina Baumgärtel, *Angelika Kauffmann*, exh. cat. Düsseldorf, München and Chur (Kunstmuseum, Haus der Kunst and Bündner Museum), 1999, p.96.

<sup>12</sup> Bettina Baumgärtel, *Angelika Kauffmann*, exh. cat. Düsseldorf, München and Chur (Kunstmuseum, Haus der Kunst and Bündner Museum), 1999, p.435.

Johann Kauffman died in 1829 and the painting is recorded in the posthumous inventory of his house on Via di San Nicolo Tolentino just off Piazza Barberini:

'43 Un Quadro di misura d'Imperatore per alto rappresentante Ebbe senza cornice  
Scudi tre.'

Six months after Johann Kauffman's death, in a letter dated 16 August 1829, his nephew, also called Johann, a clockmaker from Dornbirn offered the painting with a group of works by Kauffman to the Ferdinandeum Museum in Innsbruck.<sup>13</sup> Offered for 240 guilders, the museum declined and the painting remained with the Kauffman family in Dornbirn.

The painting was eventually acquired by Maria Magdalena Vogler-Bächler. Bächler's parents were wealthy, her mother was the heiress to a prominent family of wine merchants and her father Johann Ulrich Bächler was the builder of the Sallmann house in Kreuzlingen. The painting passed to her grandson Alfred Ernst Sallmann who lent the painting to Chur in 1941 for the exhibition mounted on the bicentenary of Kauffman's birth. Sallmann consigned the painting to auction in Lucerne shortly after the war in June 1945 where it failed to sell. The painting was put on long-term loan at the Rosgarten Museum, Konstanz by Sallmann's descendants. The painting is therefore on the market for the first time since 1945 having been in the same family collection since the 1830s.

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<sup>13</sup> Gert Ammann, 'Ich Maira Angelica Kaufmann von Schwarzenberg in Bregenzerwald Konstanzer Kirchensprengel (Aus Zufall in Chur in Graubünden geboren)' Zur Geschichte der Erwerbungen von Werken der Angelika Kauffmann im Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck, *Handschriftliche Dokumente im Vereinsarchiv u in der Bibliothek in Wiss*, Innsbruck, 2012, p.147.

