

**Hans Leinberger (c.1485-1535)**  
**The Presentation in the Temple**  
 Germany, Bavaria, Landshut, Church of St Martin  
 c. 1516-18



*43 x 45.5cm / 17 x 18 inches; polychromed limewood with traces of gilding; some losses to the polychromy, consistent with the age of the sculpture. A thin crack running down the centre of the back, losses to the carving of the petals on the back and losses of the details of the rosary beads on the frame*

*Provenance:*

Collection of Konsul Rudolf Grolman, Düsseldorf, before 1960  
 Galerie Pfefferle, Munich  
 H. Kisters Collection, Kreutlingen, by 1967

*Exhibited:*

Bergenz, Kunsthaus, Meisterwerke de Plastik aus Privatsammlungen im Bodenseegebiet, 1967

*Published:*

Bergenz, Kunsthaus. *Meisterwerke de Plastik aus Privatsammlungen im Bodenseegebiet*. 1967, pp. 51.

Maek-Gérard, Michael. *Nachantike Grossplastische Bildwerke, Band III: Die Deutschsprachigen Länder, ca. 1380 – 1530/40*. Liebieghaus: Frankfurt am Main, 1985, pp. 134.

*Bayern-Kunst und Kultur zu den XX*, exhibition catalogue. Olympischen Sommerspielen, Munich, 1972, p. 356.

Liedke, Volker. *Hans Leinberger, Marginalien zu Künstlerischen und genealogischen Herkunft des grossen Landshuter Bildschnitzers*. Munich, 1976, p. 51.

Schädler, Alfred. 'Zur Künstlerischen Entwicklung Hans Leinbergers.' *Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, vol. XXVIII. Munich 1977, p. 76.

Thoma, Hans. (ed.) *Hans Leinberger : seine Stadt, seine Zeit, sein Werk*. Regensburg, 1979, no. 21, p. 160.

Niehoff, Franz. (ed.) *Um Leinberger, Schüler und Zeitgenossen*. Museen der Stadt, Landshut, 2007, p. 56, fig. 14.

A limewood medallion carved in low relief showing the Presentation in the Temple, one of only three surviving medallions from the renowned rosary ensemble once decorating Hans Leinberger's great masterpiece, the Rosary Madonna from Landshut. The other two medallions are in the collections of the Liebieghaus, Frankfurt, and in the Sürmond-Ludwig Museum, Aachen. (Figs. 1 – 3).

The relief is dominated by the Virgin, who holds the torso of an unruly Christ child tenderly with both of her hands. A figure of a bearded priest stands across from her, holding the hand and foot of Christ. Two attendant figures and Joseph holding a candlestick are all included in the periphery of the scene, which takes place in a stone walled room with a row of arched windows. The whole scene is surrounded by a frame, originally in the form of a string of rosary beads, since carved back. On a miniature scale, the beads are indicative of the function of the medallion as a rosary bead itself, as it would have once formed a part of a monumental ensemble surrounding a central figure of the Virgin, much like the celebrated rosary by Veit Stoss in Nuremberg, made contemporaneously (Fig. 4). The flower petals carved on the back of all three reliefs are another indication that this medallion once hung to be seen from both sides. The rosary ensemble that our roundel belongs to was most probably in St Martin's Church, where Leinberger's figure of the Virgin remains in situ. The two other surviving rosary medallions also depict scenes from the Life of the Virgin – the Annunciation and the Nativity (figs. 1 -2). Stylistically, all three medallions share many characteristics with Leinberger's other surviving sculptures, including the flow and fashions of the draperies, the modelling of the hair, and the architectural landscapes populating the background.

Although very little is known about Hans Leinberger, he and his workshop enjoyed enormous popularity in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, proven by the frequent appearance of Leinberger's name in documents from the region. A contemporary of Veit Stoss, Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach, Leinberger was court artist to Ludwig X, Duke of Bavaria, an important patron of the arts. Due to the abundance of projects that Leinberger worked on in Bavaria and Austria, we cannot rule out the contribution of his equally gifted workshop to these medallions, but its workmanship and quality of carving suggests Leinberger's direct involvement.



Fig. 1  
Hans Leinberger  
Annunciation and Nativity  
Germany, Landshut  
c. 1518  
Suermondt-Ludwig Museum, Aachen (left) and Liebieghaus, Frankfurt (right)



Fig. 2  
Landshut Rosary Reconstruction with the three surviving medallions and the Landshut Madonna.  
Reconstruction to scale.



Fig. 3  
Hans Leinberger  
Rosary Madonna  
Germany, Landshut  
c. 1515 - 20



Fig. 4  
Veit Stoss  
Rosary Ensemble  
Germany, Nuremberg, St Lorenz  
c. 1518