



**FERNANDO BOTERO** Colombia b.1932

Los Ricos

Signed and dated "Botero 67" lower right  
oil on canvas

76 x 62 1/2 in. 209.9 x 162.9 cm.

Painted in 1967

This work is sold with a photo certificate signed by the  
artist, Obra de mi mano Botero

## PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Netherlands  
Gary Nader Art Centre, Miami FL

For more than six decades, Fernando Botero has passionately devoted himself to the study of volume and form. This lifelong pursuit has resulted in a unified body of work that is now immediately recognizable throughout the world. Whether painting, drawing or sculpting the human or animal figure, landscapes or still-lives, Botero always plays with proportion and perspective, inflating his forms to an intentionally improbable magnitude. This singular style has solidified Botero's place in the canon of art history and made him one of the most successful artists working today.

The artist's first experiments with proportional manipulation began in the 1950s; while painting a still-life, he placed a disproportionately small sound hole in the body of a mandolin, instantly transforming the instrument into an object of mass and monumentality. "After that Mandolin," Botero has explained, "my world began to expand. I went on to figures and soon was creating a formal universe that found its supreme expression in small detail." [1] Painted in 1967, *Los ricos* is a superb early example of those Boterian ideals coming to fruition. From the perfectly circular clusters of tree leaves to the couple's plump baby-faces and their dog's elaborate spherical coil, the work is a study in rounded forms. It is through the small details, however, that Botero calls attention to the volume and form of his figures. Just as he had imbued his mandolin with enormity by shrinking its sound hole, Botero emphasizes the couple's corpulence in *Los ricos* by endowing them with strikingly diminutive hands, feet and eyes.

As in so many of Botero's works, the man and woman remain anonymous, meant to represent a specific type of person rather than an individual. Here *The Rich*, as Botero has named them, exhibit all the accoutrements that reflect their status—the woman wears an expansive fur coat that covers her ample form, turquoise high heels adorn her dainty little feet and her long pink fingernails make clear these are not working hands. Meanwhile, her dapper male companion, with his primly trimmed mustache and tailored suit complete with pocket square and top hat, suavely smokes a cigarette. Their immaculately groomed poodle pup completes their identity as wealthy elites. While far from a biting critique, there is a subtle note of satire to be found in *Los ricos*. The couple appears both endearing and slightly absurd, revealing Botero's masterful ability to humanize rather than aggrandize his subjects, a quality that has continued to make his work relatable and relevant throughout his long and prosperous career.

1 Fernando Botero, quoted in A.M. Escallón, *Botero: New Works on Canvas* (New York: Rizzoli, 1997), 23.