Stephen Ongpin Fine Art

Giulio Campi (1508 - 1573)

A Putto Carrying a Basket of Fruit

Red chalk, with touches of white heightening.
Squared for transfer in black chalk. Laid down.
Inscribed Parmigiano at the lower right.
177 x 102 mm. (7 x 4 in.)

ACQUIRED BY THE E.T.H., SWISS FEDERAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, ZURICH.

Drawings in red chalk by Giulio Campi are rare. Theis is a preparatory study for part of the decoration of the abbey church of San Sigismondo, just outside Cremona, painted by Giulio Campi in 1542. The putto in this drawing appears as part of the decorative border on the right hand side of the transept, adjacent to a fresco of Saint Augustine. The drawing displays the particular influence on Campi of Parmigianino, to whom the sheet was in fact once attributed.

This drawing was part of the Grand Ducal Collection of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach at Weimar until 1918, when the grand duchy came to an end and the collection was divided between the Saxe-Weimar family and the Schlossmuseum in Weimar. The present sheet remained in the possession of a descendant of the Saxe-Weimar family until its appearance at auction in London in 1999.

Provenance:

The Grand Ducal Collection of Saxe-Weimar, Weimar, until c.1918
By descent in the Saxe-Weimar family until 1999
Anonymous (a Saxe-Weimar descendant) sale, London, Phillips, 7 July 1999, lot 132
Trinity Fine Art, London, in 2001.

Literature:

Giulio Bora, 'La collezione Clary-Aldringen. Integrazione e aggiunte', in Maria Grazia Balzarini and Roberto Cassanelli, ed., Fare storia dell'arte: Studi offerti a Liana Castelfranchi, Milan, 2000, pp.117-118, fig.69; Edoardo Testori, Dessins Anciens de l'Ecole Lombarde, exhibition catalogue, Paris, 2001, pp.28-29, no.7 and a detail illustrated on the cover.

Artist description:

One of a Cremonese family of painters, alongside his younger brothers Antonio and Vincenzo, Giulio Campi probably received his initial artistic training with his father Galeazzo Campi. His first signed and dated painting was an altarpiece executed in 1527 for the Cremonese church of SS. Nazaro e Celso, and for the remainder of his career he worked mainly as a fresco painter in the churches of his native town. His chief works include scenes from the life of Saint Agatha in the church of Sant'Agata, completed in 1537, and a series of frescoes in the transepts of the monastic church of San Sigismondo, painted between 1539 and 1542. At San Sigismondo he worked alongside Camillo Boccaccino, and the two artists also collaborated on the temporary decorations to celebrate the entrance of the Emperor Charles V into Cremona in 1541. Campi also worked as an architect, and as such was involved in the rebuilding and decoration of Santa Margherita in Cremona in 1547.

Both Giulio and Antonio Campi received a number of significant commissions beyond Cremona, notably in Milan - where their work was to have an influence on the young Caravaggio - and in Brescia, where they painted a number of canvases for the Palazzo della Loggia from 1549 onwards. Giulio is likely to have made a trip to Rome in the middle of the 1550's, and in 1557 undertook the fresco decoration of the first bay of San Sigismondo, for which he also painted an altarpiece in 1565. Near the end of his career he painted a several works for the Duomo in Cremona, notably the large organ shutters, and worked in the church of Santa Maria di Campagna in Piacenza.