

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Vincenzo SPISANELLI (Orta Novarese 1595 - Bologna 1662)

The Entombment of Christ

Pen and brown ink, extensively heightened with white and greyish oil paint, on paper washed reddish-brown.

Numbered 660 on the verso, backed.

271 x 214 mm. (10 5/8 x 8 3/8 in.)

Drawings by or attributed to Spisanelli are extremely rare, and only two sheets by the artist may be definitively related to extant paintings. A large red chalk drawing of The Conversion of Paul in the Schloss Fachsenfeld collection at the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart¹ is a preparatory study for Spisanelli's painting of the subject in the church of San Domenico in Bologna. The attribution of the present sheet is based on a stylistic comparison with what seems to be the only other known preparatory drawing by the artist; a study of The Deposition in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rennes. The Rennes drawing - of similar medium, technique and subject to the present sheet - is a study for a small painting by Spisanelli of The Deposition known in several versions, notably one example in the Molinari Pradelli collection in Marano di Castenaso.

Another drawing attributed to Spisanelli, of comparable medium and technique, was on the art market in Paris in 2001.

Provenance:

Giuseppe Vallardi, Milan (Lugt 1223)

Carlo Prayer, Milan (Lugt 2044)

P. & D. Colnaghi, London, in 1990.

Artist description:

Vincenzo Spisanelli (sometimes Spisano or Pisanelli) was a pupil and follower of Denys Calvaert at the end of the master's career in Bologna, and like many of his contemporaries there was also strongly influenced by the work of the Carracci. The Bolognese biographer Cesare Malvasia mentions Spisanelli only with reference to his character and personality, without discussing his works or career in any detail, and indeed the artist remains little known and barely studied today. He seems to have worked mainly in Bologna, painting altarpieces for churches in the city and the surrounding region, and several works by the artist survive in Bolognese churches and collections. These include a painting of The Death of the Virgin in the church of San Domenico and a Baptism of Christ painted for the church of San Francesco and later transferred to San Giorgio, as well as an Adoration of the Shepherds in the Museo Davia Bargellini in Bologna. Paintings by Spisanelli may also be found further afield; in Ferrara, Imola, Modena, Forlì and Rimini. His son and pupil Ippolito was also a painter, although he died not long after his father.