

Donato CRETI (Cremona 1672 - Bologna 1749)

A Young Woman

Pen and brown ink. Oval.
Framing lines in brown ink.
Inscribed (by Horace Walpole) Donato Creti on the backing sheet.
104 x 74 mm. (4 1/4 x 2 7/8 in.)

The attribution of this drawing, which may be dated to the first or second decade of the 18th century, has been confirmed by Marco Riccòmini.

Provenance:

Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of Orford, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, Middlesex
By descent to his cousin's daughter, Anne Seymour Damer, and thence to his great niece, Laura, Countess of Waldegrave, by 1811
Thence by descent to George Waldegrave, 7th Earl of Waldegrave
His sale of the contents of Strawberry Hill, London, George Robins, 13 June 1842 onwards, possibly part of lot 1262 ('A folio, containing upwards of 100 drawings, chiefly by Italian and Spanish artists of the highest attainments, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries…') or lot 1263 ('A volume, uniformly bound with the preceding, containing upwards of 100 drawings, chiefly by Italian and Spanish artists of the same date…'), both lots bt. Tiffin for £21 and £42, respectively
Prof. Sir Albert Richardson, P.R.A., Avenue House, Ampthill, Bedfordshire; Thence by descent until 2013.

Exhibitions

Twickenham, Orleans House Gallery, Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill, 1980, no.200 (as Ascribed to Donato Creti).

Literature:

Huon Mallalieu, 'The forgotten Professor', Country Life, 2 October 2013, p.113.

Artist description:

At the age of fifteen, following an apprenticeship with Lorenzo Pasinelli, Donato Creti came to the attention of Count Alessandro Fava. The Bolognese count became the artist's protector and first patron, and the young Creti lived and worked in the Palazzo Fava for a number of years before becoming an independent master. In around 1700 he received a commission from the Counts of Novellara to decorate their family palace, and in 1708 he completed a large fresco of Alexander Cutting the Gordian Knot in the Palazzo Pepoli Campogrande in Bologna. Apart from fresco decorations, the early part of his career was taken up with secular commissions for easel pictures, such as the series of mythological subjects painted in monochrome for Marcantonio Collina Sbaraglia and now in the Collezioni Communale dell'Arte in Bologna. Together with other Bolognese and Venetian artists, Creti contributed to several of the well-known series of allegorical Tombs commissioned by Owen McSwiny in the 1720's and 1730's. Throughout the 1730's and 1740's, Creti produced several important altarpieces for churches in Emilia-Romagna and as far away as Palermo.

In his biography of the artist, Giampietro Zanotti writes that Creti's drawings were highly regarded by his contemporaries. (The painter Marcantonio Franceschini, for one, praised the artist as a 'grandissimo disegnatore'.) He learned to draw from the nude in the studio of Pasinelli, and in general preferred to use pen and ink wash for his studies, drawn with a rapid, calligraphic stroke, although he also produced head studies in chalk. Landscapes, figure studies and portraits make up the bulk of Creti's drawings, many of which, according to Zanotti, were given away as presents by the artist.