Francesco Bartolozzi (Florence 1725 - Lisbon 1815)

The Head of a Bearded Man

Black and red chalk.
Signed with initials FB in pencil at the lower left centre.
306 x 230 mm. (12 x 9 in.)

Artist description:

Best known as a printmaker, with an oeuvre of more than 2,500 engravings, Francesco Bartolozzi first studied with his father, a goldsmith, in his native Florence. He later was enrolled in the Accademia di Belle Arti, where he trained with Ignazio Hugford and Giovanni Domenico Ferretti. At the age of twenty he moved to Venice, where he worked in the studio of Joseph Wagner and produced engravings after the work of such prominent local painters as Giambattista Piazzetta, Pietro Longhi, Sebastiano Ricci and Francesco Zuccarelli. By 1760 Bartolozzi was in Rome, where he collaborated with the historian Stefano Bottari on an edition of Vasari's Lives. It was in Rome that he met Richard Dalton, Librarian to King George III, who persuaded the artist to come to England in 1764.

Bartolozzi was to live and work in England for nearly forty years, establishing a highly successful career as a reproductive engraver. Among the publishers he worked for was John Boydell, for whose Shakespeare Gallery Bartolozzi contributed engravings. He was also appointed Engraver to the King, and was a founding member of the Royal Academy in 1768. As a printmaker, Bartolozzi worked in a variety of techniques, and made a particular specialty of a stipple technique of colour engraving. In 1802 he became the first president of the Society of Engravers, and later that same year was appointed director of the Academy of Fine Arts in Lisbon. He remained in Lisbon, working productively and with his artistic skills remaining largely undiminished, until his death in 1815.

Significant groups of drawings by Francesco Bartolozzi are today in the collections of the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon, the Albertina in Vienna, the British Museum in London and the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle.