Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Remigio CANTAGALLINA (Borgo San Sepolcro 1575 - Florence 1656)

A Boat in a Harbour

Pen and brown ink and wash, over faint traces of an underdrawing in black chalk. Framing lines in brown ink. Laid down.
221 x 238 mm. (8 3/4 x 9 3/8 in.)

The drawings of Cantagallina and his younger contemporary Baccio del Bianco (1604-1657) have often been confused, as both draughtsmen worked in a similar style. A comparable pen landscape of boats in a natural harbour in the Biblioteca Marucelliana in Florence has, for example, been attributed to Baccio del Bianco1. Similar studies of boats are, however, to be found in the Cantagallina sketchbook in Brussels, drawn during a trip the artist made to the Low Countries between 1612 and 1613. Another, similar drawing of a boat in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rennes3, attributed there to Baccio del Bianco, is also likely to be by Cantagallina.

Two further drawings by Cantagallina of coastal landscapes with shipping, more expansive in composition, were also at one time in the collection of Christian Humann.

Provenance:

Mathias Komor, New York (Lugt 1882a), his mark stamped on the old backing sheet
Christian Humann, New York
His sale, New York, Sotheby Parke Bernet, 12 June 1982, lot 22
Mark Fehrs Haukohl, Houston
His (anonymous) sale, New York, Sotheby's, 26 January 2000, lot 145
P. & D. Colnaghi, London, in 2001
Private collection.

Exhibitions

Houston, University of Houston, Sarah Campbell Blaffer Gallery, Italian Drawings from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries from Houston Collections, 1985; Houston, Museum of Fine Arts, The Private Eye: Selected Works from Collections of Friends of the Museum of Fine Arts, 1989, no.51; New York and London, Colnaghi, Master Drawings, 2001, no.14.

Literature:

Esther de Vécsey, ed., Italian Drawings from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries from Houston Collections, exhibition catalogue, Houston, Sarah Campbell Blaffer Gallery, 1985, p.17 (entry by Kristal Kirksey); Carol J. Everingham, 'Italian art a full menu', The Houston Post, September 14th, 1985, p.3G, illustrated.

Artist description:

Said to be a pupil of Giulio Parigi, Remigio Cantagallina produced his earliest known works, a series of landscape etchings, in 1603. Relatively little is known of his life and career, which was spent mostly in Florence, although a trip to Flanders between 1611 and 1613 is documented by a number of drawings in a sketchbook today in the Musée Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels. Described by Filippo Baldinucci as 'famous for his landscape drawings in pen' ('celebre in disegnar paesi a penna'), Cantagallina was particularly influenced by the work of such Northern artists as Paul Bril. He was, in turn, to be an important influence on the later generation of landscape draughtsmen working in Florence, including Ercole Bazzicaluva, Baccio del Bianco and Jacques Callot, whom Cantagallina seems to have befriended on his arrival in Florence in the early years of the 17th century, and may have helped to train. Among the few pubic works commissioned from the artist were the ephemeral decorations to celebrate the wedding in Florence of the Grand Duke Cosimo II de' Medici to Maria-Maddalena of Austria, executed in collaboration with Parigi in 1508. Only one painting by Cantagallina is known, however; a very large Last Supper painted with his brother Antonio in 1604, intended for a monastery in his native town of Sansepolcro and now in the Museo Civico there.

A prolific artist, Cantagallina produced a large number of highly finished topographical views of Florence and other sites in Tuscany, drawn with warm brown washes, that are among his finest achievements. Many of these drawings, such as a remarkable large View of Siena in the Uffizi, were almost certainly intended as independent works of art. His draughtsmanship was closely related to his work as a printmaker, and he produced over sixty etchings, mostly of pastoral landscapes and festival scenes. The largest collection of landscape drawings by Cantagallina, numbering more than two hundred sheets, is in the Uffizi in Florence; one of these, a drawing dated 1655, is the artist's last known dated work.