

Sinibaldo Scorza (Voltaggio 1589 - Genoa 1631)

A Horse Lying Down

Pen and brown ink, over an underdrawing in black chalk.
133 x 175 mm. (5 1/4 x 6 7/8 in.)

Sinibaldo Scorza produced numerous independent drawings of animals, to be used when needed as motifs for his paintings and engravings. Indeed, most of his extant drawings are studies of animals, alongside a handful of landscape and figure drawings. Soprani noted of the artist that he filled two albums with drawings of animals and landscapes, which he had intended to have engraved, although he died before achieving this goal.

Among stylistically comparable pen drawings by Scorza is a study of a standing cow in the Czartoryski collection at the Muzeum Narodowe in Cracow and a drawing of a saddled, grazing horse, which appeared at auction in London in 1997. A closely related study of a standing horse, of similar technique and dimensions, was also in the Carlo Prayer collection and appeared with the present sheet on the art market in 1989.

Provenance:

Carlo Prayer, Milan (Lugt 2044)
Juan and Felix Bernasconi, Milan
By descent in the Bernasconi family
Bernasconi sale, London, Christie's, 5 July 1988, part of lot 218 (as Attributed to Scorza)
Bernasconi sale, London, Christie's, 6 December 1988, part of lot 205 (as Attributed to Scorza)
P. & D. Colnaghi, London.

Exhibitions

New York, Colnaghi, Master Drawings, 1989, no.18.

Artist description:

Born into an aristocratic Piedmontese family, Sinibaldo Scorza entered the studio of Giovanni Battista Paggi in Genoa in 1604. As an independent master, he made a speciality of small canvases of Biblical

or mythological scenes, often crowded with animals, such as the Orpheus Singing to the Animals, known in several versions. He also painted landscapes and pastoral scenes; the ‘capricciose bizzarrie rustiche, e pastorali’ praised by his biographers Raffaele Soprani and C. G. Ratti, who note that such works were in great demand among Genoese collectors. Scorza also painted a handful of religious subjects, notably an Assumption in the church of San Giovanni Battista in his native town of Voltaggio, completed in 1617. Between 1619 and 1625 he worked in Turin as court painter to Carlo Emmanuele, Duke of Savoy. Following a brief visit to Rome, he returned in 1627 to Genoa, where he may have taken over Paggi’s workshop after the master’s death. Near the end of his career, as Soprani and Ratti note, Scorza took up the practice of etching, and it is also during this last Genoese period – between 1627 and his death in 1631 - that he may have had the young Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione as an apprentice in his studio. Certainly his landscape and animal paintings were a particular influence on Castiglione, who may also have learned the rudiments of etching from the elder artist.

Scorza was greatly admired as a draughtsman. His drawings were collected by the Duc d’Orléans and the Genoese art historian and biographer Carlo Giuseppe Ratti, among others, while the 19th century Genoese sculptor Santo Varni, who formed a significant collection of drawings by Ligurian artists, owned nearly seventy drawings by Scorza. Most of the artist’s surviving drawings are today in the collection of the Palazzo Rosso in Genoa, while an important sketchbook, dated 1607 and containing around four hundred drawings by Scorza, is in the Muzeum Narodowe in Cracow.