

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Giuseppe Bernardino BISON (Palmanova 1762 - Milan 1844)

A Ship in a Storm

Pen and brown ink and two shades of brown wash, over an underdrawing in black chalk.

Signed Bison at the lower right.

162 x 194 mm. (6 3/8 x 7 5/8 in.) [sheet]

The present work belonged to Sir Bruce Ingram (1877-1963), one-time editor of the *Illustrated London News* and among the most enthusiastic collectors of drawings of his day. Ingram had a particular penchant for maritime and shipping scenes, as was noted by one scholar in the introduction to an exhibition catalogue of drawings and paintings of such subjects in 1938: 'Captain Bruce Ingram has assembled a collection of maritime drawings which, at a modest computation, may be said to stand among the finest in the world.'

Provenance:

Sir Bruce Ingram, Chesham (Lugt 1405a), his mark, with the letter B below, on the verso
Carl Winter, Cambridge (his mark CW, not in Lugt, on the verso).

Artist description:

One of the last and most delightful exponents of the 18th century vedute tradition, Giuseppe Bernardino Bison received his artistic training in the studio of Anton Maria Zanetti in Venice. The early part of his career was spent working as a decorative fresco painter at villas and palaces around the Veneto. Around 1800 he settled in Trieste, where among his more important works were the decoration of the Palazzo Carciotti, painted around 1805, and the Palazzo della Vecchia Borsa, completed three years later. In 1831 Bison moved to Milan, where he worked for the remainder of his career, and where he was particularly active as a scenographer, producing stage designs for the Teatro alla Scala and other theatres. He painted a large number of views of Venice, often inspired by engravings after Canaletto's paintings, as well as numerous small landscapes in both oil and tempera, intended for sale to collectors. Although his career lasted well into the 19th century, his style invariably retains something of the flavour of the previous century; indeed, his work has been aptly described by one recent scholar as 'a last late flowering of the Venetian Settecento'.

Bison was an accomplished and prolific draughtsman, with an oeuvre of charming genre studies and landscapes in pen and ink wash or gouache. His earliest works show the influence of Giambattista Tiepolo and Francesco Guardi, while his later drawings tend towards Neoclassicism. His drawings encompass a wide and varied range of subjects, from religious narratives to genre scenes, capricci, and stage and ornament designs. Few of Bison's many drawings, however, were done as preparatory studies for paintings, and he seems to have produced a large number of his drawings as independent works of art for sale; this is certainly true of his pastoral landscapes in gouache. Significant groups of drawings by Bison are today in the collections of the Castello Sforzesco in Milan, the Musei Civici in Trieste and the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York.