# Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



**Cristofano Allori (Florence 1577 - Florence 1621)**

**Landscape with a Grove of Trees, a Town in the Distance**

Black chalk, with touches of red chalk.
Inscribed Titiano at the lower left and numbered G.40 at the lower right of the mount.
Laid down on a 17th century Italian mount.
178 x 189 mm. (7 x 7 3/8 in.)

In his seminal account of 17th century Florentine painting, Filippo Baldinucci notes that Cristofano Allori made a number of landscape drawings in the environs of Florence: 'Thus our painter had the idea of learning how to depict landscapes properly, and to that end he often left the city in order to reproduce, from nature, beautiful views of the countryside in red and black chalk; he drew many of these in a small sketchbook of square format ('quarto di foglio'), so pleasingly shaded ('macchiatte') that they look coloured, all of which are now in the possession of he who writes these words, and have been included to one of his two books containing drawings by the most excellent artists of that time, which he has collected.' The landscape drawings by Allori which Baldinucci mentions as being in his own collection include a group of fifteen sheets, all apparently from one sketchbook and stylistically compatible with the present sheet, which are now in the Louvre.

The attribution of this drawing to Cristofano Allori was first proposed by Miles Chappell. As Chappell has written of the artist, Allori 'made many drawings of scenes and vignettes of nature...His picturesque views of Tuscan scenes with rustic houses and winding roads framed by twisting trees with sinuous branches and graceful, detailed clusters of leaves are unified by an atmospheric quality deriving from...soft, often blunt chalks.' Allori may have used such sketches as studies for the backgrounds of his paintings. Chappell has further noted of the artist's landscape drawings, made around the turn of the century, that '[Allori] absorbed the northern landscape style of Paul Bril and...like contemporary landscape artists in Florence such as Remigio Cantagallina and Jacques Callot, he was moving towards a fresher, more natural style.'

A stylistically comparable landscape drawing, in black and red chalk and also attributed to Allori by Chappell, is in a private collection.

**Provenance:**

Anonymous sale, Milan, Finarte, 25 October 1988, lot 192 (as Cristofano Allori.

**Literature:**

Mario di Giampaolo, ed., Disegno italiano antico: Artisti e opere dal Quattrocento al Settecento, Milan, 1994, illustrated p.75.

**Artist description:**

The son and pupil of the painter Alessandro Allori, Cristofano Allori became one of the leading artists of the early Baroque in Florence. His earliest known works are portrait commissions of members of the Medici family, painted in the 1590's and indebted to the example of the paintings of his father and of Bronzino. From 1600 Allori came under the influence of such artists as Ludovico Cigoli and Domenico Passignano, whose work was a rejection of the hard, cold style of Bronzino and the elder Allori, and moved towards a more naturalistic and less mannered style of painting. Around this time Cristofano left the studio of his father and began working with Gregorio Pagani, as well as assisting Cigoli on the decoration of some rooms in the Palazzo Pitti, and Cigoli's influence was to be particularly pervasive on the young man's work.

The early years of the 17th century found the artist also much admired as a portrait painter, his work in this field typified by the Portrait of Bernardo Davanzati of c.1605 in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. From 1605 until his death in 1621, Allori was one of the most successful painters in Florence, counting among his patrons the Grand Duke Cosimo II de' Medici and other members of the Ducal court. Among the significant works of this period were a ceiling painting of The Embarkation of Marie de' Medici in the church of the Cavalieri di Stefano in Pisa, completed in 1605, and a massive Resurrection for the cathedral of Pistoia, on which he worked between 1602 and 1610. The last decade of his career found the artist painting religious easel pictures characterized by an intense emotionalism, graceful movement and superb draughtsmanship, notably the Judith with the Head of Holofernes of c.1615, in which the severed head is a self-portrait. Among Allori's pupils were Giovanni Battista Vanni and Zanobi Rosi.