

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Domenico Maria FRATTA (Bologna 1696 - Bologna 1763)

Six Drawings on an Album Page: a. The Head of a Satyr b. The Head of a Satyr c. Mother and Child d. The Head of a Woman e. The Head of a Woman f. Mother and Child

Each pen and brown ink, of rectangular (c and f) or oval (a-b and d-e) format.
Each drawing laid down, within a wash mount with gold lines, on an album page.

Inscribed Donato Creti. beneath each drawing.

a. 49 x 40 mm. (1 7/8 x 1 5/8 in.)

b. 48 x 39 mm. (1 7/8 x 1 1/2 in.)

c. 63 x 45 mm. (2 1/2 x 1 3/4 in.)

d. 51 x 40 mm. (2 x 1 5/8 in.)

e. 50 x 40 mm. (2 x 1 5/8 in.)

f. 64 x 46 mm. (2 1/2 x 1 3/4 in.)

The album page: 424 x 318 mm. (16 5/8 x 12 1/2 in.)

Although each of the small pen and ink drawings on this large album page bears a traditional and longstanding attribution to the Bolognese artist Donato Creti (1671-1749), Marco Riccomini has pointed out that the four studies of heads are the work of Domenico Fratta, while the two drawings of a mother (the Madonna?) and child are by an anonymous follower of Creti.

Little is known of the 18th century Scottish lawyer and collector John McGouan (or McGowan), who died in Edinburgh in 1803. A founder member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, his collection of prints and drawings was sold and dispersed at two posthumous auctions in London in 1803 and 1804. Several drawings, including the present sheet, were acquired by the Scottish banker Sir William Forbes, 7th Baronet of Pitsligo (1773-1828).

Provenance:

John McGouan (or McGowan), Edinburgh (Lugt 1496), his collector's mark stamped ten times on the reverse of the album page

His posthumous sale, London, T. Philipe, 26 January – 4 February 1804, lot 191 (as Creti)

Probably acquired at the sale by Sir William Forbes, 7th Bt. of Pitsligo, Colinton House, Greenhill House and Fettercairn House, Kincardineshire

Thence by descent in the Forbes family at Fettercairn House, Kincardineshire.

Artist description:

A pupil of Domenico Maria Viani and Carlo Rambaldi, Domenico Fratta seems to have little or no success as a painter, and is best known as a draughtsman and printmaker. In this he was particularly indebted to Creti, whom he would have met at the Casa Fava in Bologna, and who was to have a profound influence on his draughtsmanship. Fratta produced a large number of reproductive drawings and engravings after the work of earlier Bolognese painters, and contributed illustrations for Giampietro Zanotti's *Storia dell'Accademia Clementina*, published in 1739. In later years he developed problems with his eyesight that made it difficult for him to continue working as an engraver, and instead provided finished drawings as models for other printmakers.

As a draughtsman, Fratta worked mainly in pen, with a manner indebted to that of his teacher and mentor Creti; indeed, drawings by him are often confused with those of the elder artist. Fratta also produced a number of highly finished pen drawings, including several landscapes, which were in all likelihood intended as autonomous works of art for sale.