

Giacomo FAVRETTO (Venice 1849 - Venice 1887)

A Man Smoking a Pipe

Pen and brown ink, with framing lines in brown ink.

Signed G. FAVRETTO at the lower right.

193 x 126 mm. (7 5/8 x 5 in.) [image]

218 x 164 mm. (8 1/2 x 6 1/2 in.) [sheet]

Giacomo Favretto was a prolific draughtsman, working mainly in pen and ink and in black chalk, and many of his drawings remain today in private collections in Italy. He was also a fine watercolourist, although he tended to use the medium primarily for heads and figure studies for his paintings.

The present sheet may tentatively be identified as a youthful self-portrait by Favretto, to judge by the appearance of the artist in a handful of self-portraits executed in the first half of the 1870s, when he was in his early twenties.

Literature:

Alberto Craievich, ed., Una passione discreta: La collezione Paolo Galli, exhibition catalogue, Venice, 2024-2025, pp.252-253, no.VII.7.

Artist description:

The Venetian painter Giacomo Favretto had a relatively brief career, dying at the age of thirty-eight. He was born into a modest family, the son of a carpenter, and was trained at the Accademia in Venice,

which he entered in 1864 at the age of fifteen. There he was a pupil of Michelangelo Grigoletti and Pompeo Molmenti, and after completing his studies he remained at the Accademia as an assistant to Molmenti until 1878. From the start of his independent career Favretto made a speciality of scenes of contemporary Venetian life. He first came to public prominence in 1878 when an amusing genre painting entitled The Mouse was exhibited at the Brera in Milan. (The previous year, however, the artist had lost an eye as a result of a blood infection.) Also in 1878, Favretto sent two paintings to the Exposition Universelle in Paris, which he visited that year in the company of the painter Guglielmo Ciardi. While in Paris he was much taken with the period compositions of Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier and Mariano Fortuny, and on his return to Venice began to depict 18th century costume pieces of genre scenes and images of daily life in the city. After his trip to Paris Favretto seems not to have left Venice again, although he continued to exhibit widely throughout Italy - mainly in Milan, Turin and Venice - and received commissions from art dealers and galleries as far afield as Germany and England. Although best known as a painter of popular genre subjects, he was also an accomplished portraitist.