JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

Turkeys, chickens, a peacock and duck by a wall, a view to a landscape beyond

PIETRO NERI SCACCIATI

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Description

PIETRO NERI SCACCIATI Italian School? -1749Turkeys, chickens, a peacock and duck by a wall, a view to a landscape beyond Oil on canvasOverall framed size 180.6 x 248.5 cms 711/8 x 975/8 ins Pietro Neri Scacciati was the son of the renowned Florentine flower and animal painter Andrea Scacciati (1642-1704), also known as Andrea il Vecchio who, along with Bartolomeo Bimbi (1648-1729) was the most important still-life painter in Florence in the latter part of the 17th century. Pietro received artistic instruction from his father and qualified from the Accademia del Disegno in 1715 and then worked in Florence as an animal and bird painter, principally at the Villa Ambogiana at Montelupo Fiorentino, near Empoli the palace of the Medici Grand Duke Cosimo III of Tuscany.Andrea had worked for Cosimo II and when Cosimo III succeeded his father, the latter commissioned Andrea, Pietro Neri and Bartolomeo Bimbi to produce a series of paintings at the villa depicting animals and flowers. These works became famous, partly because of the number of paintings, as the set comprised almost a hundred pieces, and partly because of the size of many of them. Pietro Neri and Bimbi, apart from studying living animals probably found in the Serraglio degli animali rari, where Bimbi obtained the majority of the models for the painted animal “portraits” that he was commissioned to create for Cosimo III. Bimbi’s pictures, along with those painted later by Scacciati, also used stuffed animals as models for a number of them, many of which were from the collection of Princess Violante and the Medicis, and these included storks, parrots, baboons and monkeys. The whole project outlasted the patronage of Cosimo III but was continued under his son Gian Gastone who was the last Medici Grand Duke and concentrated in the 1730s.The paintings were designed to reflect Cosimo’s passion for natural history which included the recording and classification of the flora and fauna that could be found on his estates and in his collections and also his encouragement of zoological research. The Scacciatis had an exceptional talent for the precise portrayal of birds and consequently he was one of the most sought-after animal painters in Florence, together with Bartolomeo Bimbi. Bimbi tended to depict animals more than birds which were closely studied and precisely anatomically accurate but imbued with naturalism. Scacciati’s paintings, which continued on into Gian Gastone’s time, are characterised by the depiction of vivid groups of birds and animals in landscape settings and illustrate the range of the zoological and taxidermy collections relying less on the scientific observation and instilling some personal imaginative representation.Between 1735 and 1737, Scacciati was appointed Director of Works of the Pietre Commesse della Real Galleria and later was made Superintendent. The influence of Bimbi is discernible in the commissions of the 1730s but Scacciati imbued his works with more imagination and vivacity thus moving away from the more idealistic scientific interpretation. The paintings can be s...

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