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ANSELM FEUERBACH

1829 Speyer - Venice 1880

Study of the Head of a Young Roman [Giacomo Orlandi di Subiaco]

Oil on canvas; executed c.1857.

43.7 x 62.7 cm

PROVENANCE: Private collection, Rome – Henry Helbig, (architect), Munich - Theodor Schall, Baden-Baden – Burgomaster Dr. Fuchs, Cologne (from 1950) – Galerie Aenne Abels, Cologne – Private collection, Germany

LITERATURE: Hermann Uhde-Bernays, *Feuerbach. Des Meisters Gemälde in 200 Abbildungen*, Klassiker der Kunst, XXIII, Stuttgart and Berlin 1913, no. 159 [listed as bearing a monogram „AF“ and a date “Rom 1857“ by a later hand] – Jürgen Ecker, *Anselm Feuerbach Leben und Werk, Kritischer Katalog der Gemälde, Ölskizzen und Ölstudien*, Munich 1991, p. 177, no. 271, repr. [listed as bearing a monogram „AF“ by a later hand]

Anselm Feuerbach enrolled at the Düsseldorf Academy in 1845 and took up his studies under Wilhelm von Schadow. He moved to Munich in 1848, where he made copies after Old Masters in the Alte Pinakothek. The museum's rich holdings of works by Rubens made a notable impact on him. After a short stay in Antwerp, Feuerbach moved to Paris in 1851, where he spent three years as a pupil of Thomas Couture. Although his self-confident and intense self-portrait of 1851-2 shows a debt to the work of Veronese, Rubens and Delacroix, it also reveals a new maturity. Scorning the laborious, pedantic academicism of German art, he now championed the genius and spontaneity of the great traditions of Italy and France. In 1854, he returned briefly to Germany for personal reasons. Here, he found a patron in Friedrich von Baden who funded his first visit to Venice later that year.

In the autumn of 1856, Feuerbach travelled via Bologna to Rome. The city was to be his principal place of residence for the rest of his life. His friendships with members of the circle of German artists in Rome, among them Arnold Böcklin and Reinhold Begas, sustained him through frequent periods of financial difficulty and ill health. He was especially attached to Rome because of his liaison with Anna (“Nanna”) Risi, a cobbler's wife whom he met in 1860 and who became his model and mistress. For him, she was the embodiment of the Classical ideal of womanhood. Feuerbach died in Venice in 1880.

The present portrait of Giacomo Orlandi di Subiaco can be dated to circa 1857. An impressive portrait depicting Giacomo *en face* executed in 1847 by the German artist Johann Niessen (1821 - Cologne - 1910) confirms the identity of the sitter. It is inscribed with the name of the model [Fig. 1].¹ All the evidence points to the remarkable popularity of Orlandi di Subiaco as a model in the Roman art world between 1840 and 1860. Feuerbach arrived in Rome on 22 December 1856 and very probably produced this idealized representation of Roman physical aesthetic appeal at the beginning of his stay. In the young man's distinctive facial characteristics and his unruly head of curls Feuerbach found a source

¹ Charcoal on paper, 292 x 225 mm, inscribed and dated lower right *Rom 1847 Giacomo Orlandi di Subiaco*.

Provenance: From an album formerly in the collection of Johann Georg von Sachsen (Lugt 1466) – H. W. Fichter Kunsthandel, Frankfurt – Bernd Schultz, Villa Grisebach, Berlin – Le Claire Kunst, Hamburg.

of strong visual stimulus. Orlandi's well-defined features, bronzed skin and powerful physical presence represented the image *par excellence* of a Roman youth – his body honed by physical exertion and his mind schooled by the diversity of the city's rich artistic heritage. Caravaggio too, searching in his painting for a similar set of characteristics, had found the best models on the streets of Rome.

The present portrait is one of a number of paintings and drawings of Orlandi di Subiaco made by such artists as Edgar Degas (1834 - Paris - 1917) [Fig. 2]² and Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824 Vésoul - Paris 1904) [Fig. 3] during their sojourn in Rome. Feuerbach achieves a painterly interpretation of the model in which light is not exploited for dramatic effect, as in the drawing by Degas, but used to capture the aesthetic and emotional sensitivity of the model's features.

We would like to thank Aurelio Fichter and Jürgen Ecker for their help in cataloguing this painting. Jürgen Ecker kindly has confirmed the attribution.

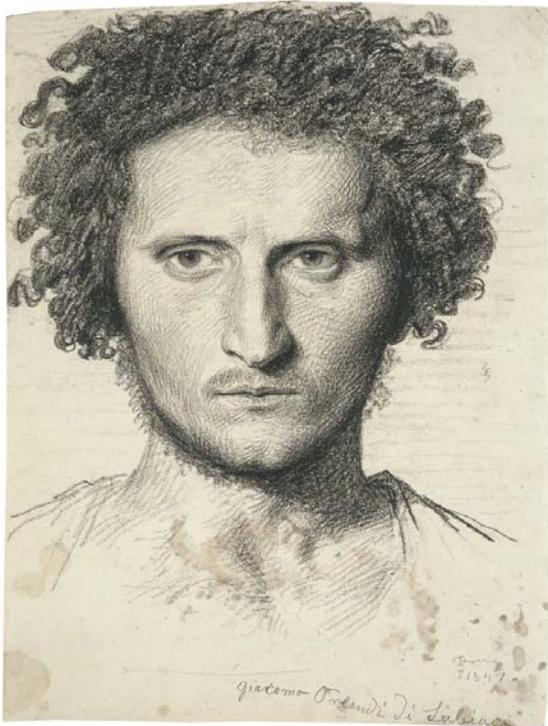


Fig. 1: Johann Niessen, *Portrait of Giacomo Orlandi di Subiaco*, 1847
Charcoal on paper, inscribed and dated lower right *Rom 1847* /
Giacomo Orlandi di Subiaco. 292 x 225 mm.
Le Claire Kunst, Hamburg

² Edgar Degas made four different portraits. In all of them he was interested in the dramatic range possible in a head with such forceful features; he even made use of the open-necked shirt to heighten this impression [The Art Institute of Chicago. See Jean Sutherland Boggs, *Drawings by Edgar Degas*, exhib. cat., City Art Museum of Saint Louis; Philadelphia Museum of Art; The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, 1966-7, p. 26, no. 6, repr. p. 29; see also *Vente Atelier Edgar Degas*, Paris 1919, III and IV, p. 89, nos. 94a-c [*Têtes d'homme*].



Fig. 2: Edgar Degas, *Tête d'homme* [Giacomo Orlandi di Subiaco]
Charcoal and pencil, stamped *Degas* and inscribed *Rome*, 384 x 254 mm.
Private collection³

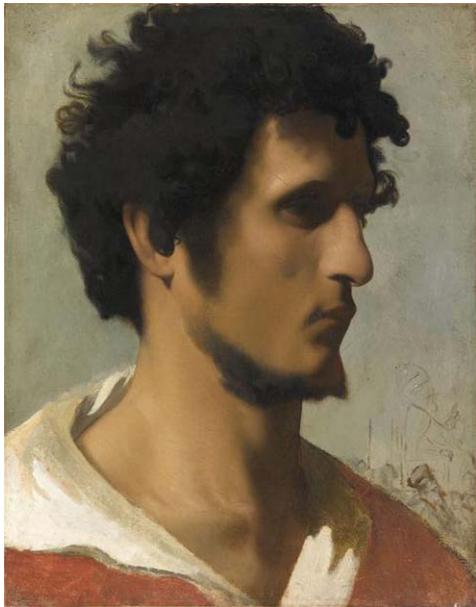


Fig. 3: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Tête de paysan de la campagne romaine* [Giacomo Orlandi di Subiaco], 1843-4
Oil on canvas, 46.5 x 36.5 cm.
Musée Magnin, Dijon⁴

³ Sotheby's New York, auction sale, *Impressionist & Modern Art – Day Sale*, 17 May 2017, lot 393, p. 423, repr.

⁴ Gerald M. Ackerman, *Jean-Léon Gérôme, Monographie révisé, Catalogue raisonné, mis à jour*, Paris 2000, p. 210, no. 7, repr.