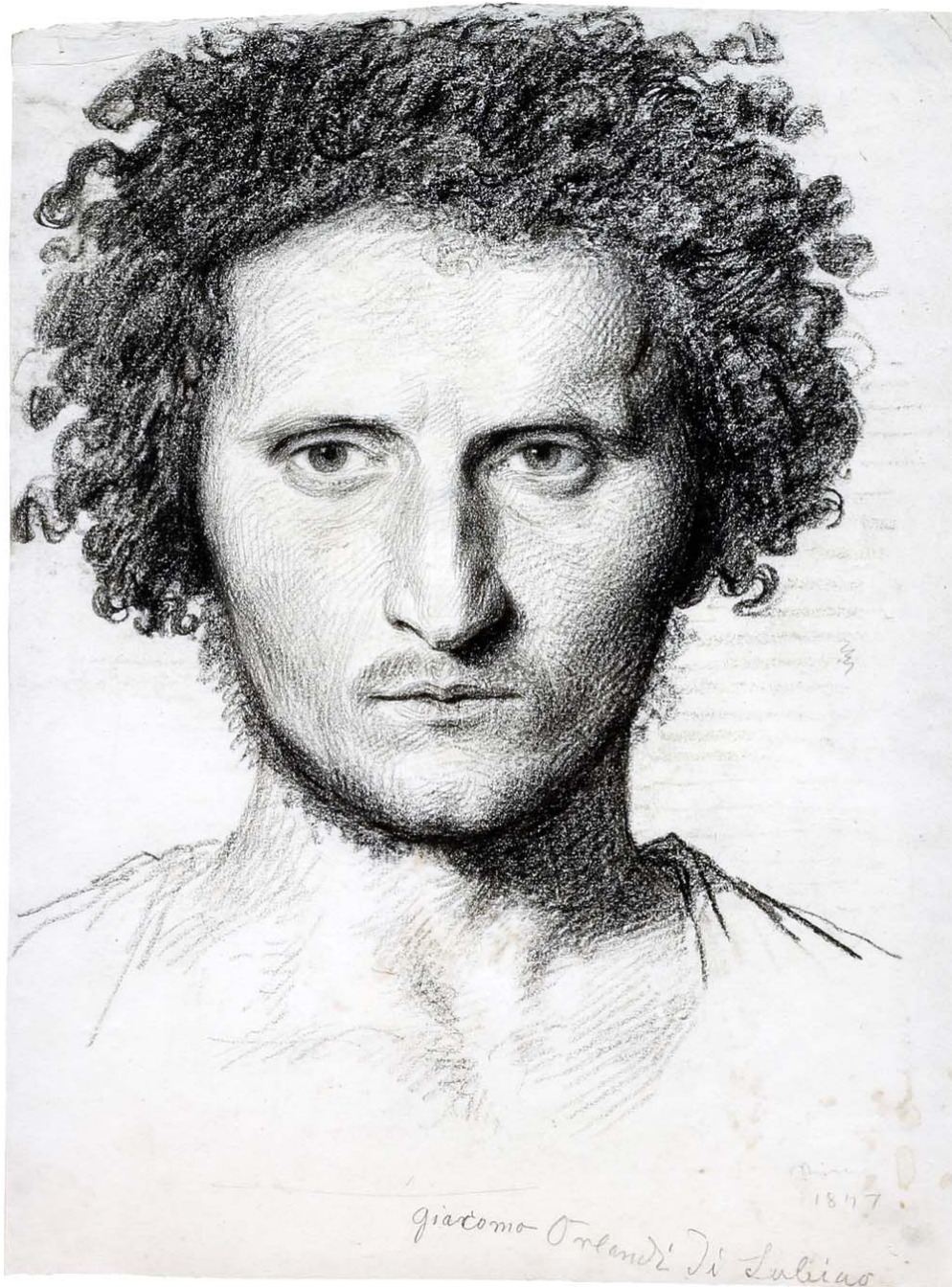


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JOHANNES NIESSEN

1821 - Cologne - 1910

Study of the Head of a Young Roman (Giacomo Orlandi di Subiaco)

Charcoal on paper; 1847.

Inscribed and dated lower right: *Rom 1847.*

Titled by the artist: *Giacomo Orlandi di Subiaco.*

292 x 225 mm

PROVENANCE: From an Album of the collection of Johann Georg of Saxony (with the collector's stamp [Lugt 1466] on the end paper) – Private collection, Saxony – H. W. Fichter Kunsthandel, Frankfurt (2008) – Private collection, Berlin

Johannes Niessen enrolled 1843 at the Düsseldorf Academy and took up his studies under Eduard Risse. In Autumn 1847, after completing his studies and thanks to a travel scholarship, Niessen travelled via Venice and Florence to Rome. 1850 he returned to Düsseldorf with numerous drawings and sketches he realised during his Italian sojourn.

1866 Niessen was designated director of the Walraff Richartz Museum in Cologne.

Thanks to Niessen's inscription in this drawing, we know today the name of the portrayed young man: Giacomo Orlandi. He was just 20 years old at the time of this portrait; however, he was already one of the most popular male models for some foreign artists in Rome.

All the evidence points to the remarkable popularity of Giacomo Orlandi as a model in the Roman art world between 1840 and 1860. His 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 Giacomo Orlandi made by such artists as Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824 Vésoul - Paris 1904) [Fig. 1], Anselm Feuerbach (1829 Speyer - Venice 1880) [Fig. 2], and Edgar Degas (1834 - Paris - 1917) [Fig. 3]¹ during their sojourn in Rome.

We would like to thank Aurelio Fichter for his help in cataloguing this drawing.

¹ 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*].

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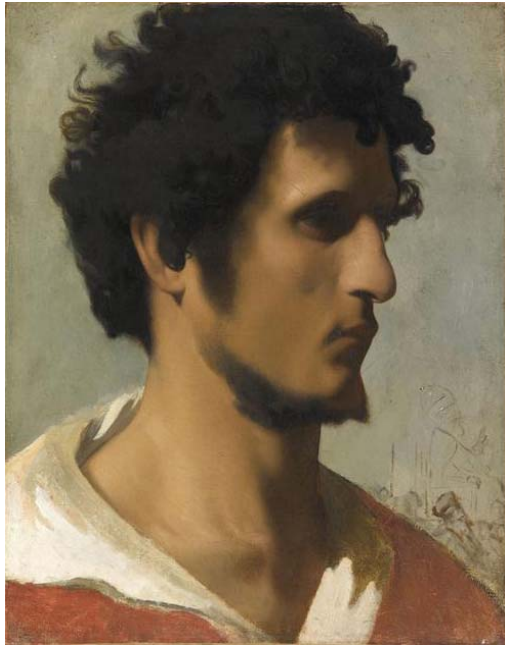


Fig. 1: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Tête de paysan de la campagne romaine* [Giacomo Orlandi], 1843-4,
oil on canvas, 46.5 x 36.5 cm.
Musée Magnin, Dijon



Fig. 2: Anselm Feuerbach, *Kopf eines Römers* (Giacomo Orlandi), c.1857,
oil on canvas, 43.7 x 62.7 cm.
Private collection, New York

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Fig. 3: Edgar Degas, *Tête d'homme* [Giacomo Orlandi], c.1860, charcoal and pencil, stamped *Degas* and inscribed *Rome*, 384 x 254 mm. Sotheby's New York, auction sale, *Impressionist & Modern Art – Day Sale*, 17 May 2017, lot 393.