Civita di Bagnoregio

Sir David Muirhead Bone R.A, R.E

£790



REF: 1012

Height: 36 cm (14.2")

Width: 29 cm (11.4")

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Framed Height: 61.5 cm (24.2")

Framed Width: 54 cm (21.3")

Description

One of Bone's first trips abroad was a stay from the autumn of 1910 to the summer of 1912 in central and northern Italy, accompanied by his wife Gertrude. As well as etchings, Bone made several exhibition-quality drawings of the Umbrian landscape and historic towns, notably of the cliff town of Orvieto. These are some of the most beautiful works of his career. Sylvester Bone writes in his biography of his grandfather, Muirhead Bone: Artist and Patron (2009), "Muirhead's main achievement in Italy were his drawings. They were sent back regularly for sale in London and Glasgow. Mayer of P & D Colnaghi & Obach wrote to Muirhead on 15 July 1911, when Mayer was busy getting the new gallery ready, "At the height of this work and hurry your Italian drawings reached me. It was like the touch of a soothing hand. I have seldom enjoyed anything so much. They are quite beautiful and delighted me more than I can say. I could not resist the temptation of keeping many for my own collection and in any case I have put all the best ones aside for the exhibition." Mayer did stage an exhibition of 58 of Bone's Italian drawings in March-April 1914. A number of the drawings were also used to illustrate two articles by Gertrude, published in Country Life in February and March 1914. Although this drawing does not feature, as the illustrations are solely of Orvieto itself, Gertrude's first sentence in the February article is, "If one has forsaken the convenience and tedium of the railway and travelled alone across the rather sinister moorland round Bagnorea-Civita, it is with a sense of security that one sees the lofty rock of Orvieto in front of one at nightfall." Although now restored and a tourist destination, the deserted hill town must have presented a somewhat forbidding sight to Gertrude and Muirhead Bone Seen from the Belvedere in Pazza Alberto Ricci, in modern Bagnoregio, Bone here he captures the complexity of the view over the valley to the abandoned citadel with remarkably deft, detailed but vigorous use of the pencil across a fairly large sheet of paper. In fact, the drawing was previously larger. It was exhibited in its present form in a Muirhead Bone exhibition at the Fine Art Society in 1990 (no.44). However, a Fine Art Society photograph of the work, probably taken in 1971 (image now in the Witt Library, Courtauld Institute of Art) shows the drawing was in a landscape format, apparently on three sheets of paper, 13 1/2 x 27 1/2 inches, of which the present work is the principal, centre sheet. It is unrecorded where the side sheets disappeared to between 1971 and 1990.

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