



## Attributed to Karel du Jardin

(Amsterdam 1626 - Venice 1678)

*Study for a Hunting Scene : the Trophy (circa 1657-1658)*

Red chalk, brush and gray ink wash (*recto*), pen and brown ink (*verso*)

Dimensions : 5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>'' x 7 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>'' (145 x 195 mm) – Framed : 12 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>'' x 15 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>'' (32 x 39.5 cm)

Period Louis XIII frame in carved and gilded wood decorated with foliage and scrollwork

Price on request

*We would like to thank Carolina Trupiano Kowalczyk for suggesting this attribution to Karel du Jardin after direct examination of the artwork. Her study of the drawing (in Italian), on which this presentation is based, is available on request.*

This study of hunters is intriguing not only for its subject matter (a young man bringing the foot of an animal as a trophy to a hunter busy reloading his rifle) but also for its technique: a barely sketched red chalk drawing, probably preparatory to a work in ink wash, a project that was never realized, as evidenced only by the gray highlight on the hunter's hat.

A comparison with several works by Karel du Jardin, particularly a red chalk study of a man held by the Fogg Art Museum, leads us to attribute this work to that artist (whose drawings are quite rare on the market and in public collections) and to date it to around 1657-1658, a period during which the artist was living in The Hague.

### 1. Karel du Jardin, an artist from the Netherlands influenced by *the Bamboccianti*<sup>1</sup>

Born in Amsterdam<sup>2</sup> into a modest family, Karel du Jardin began his training in his native country, as Arnold Houbraken writes<sup>3</sup>. He was the most gifted pupil of Nicolaes Berchem (Haarlem 1620 - Amsterdam 1683), who had himself been trained by his father, the still life painter Pieter Claesz (1597/98-1661). Du Jardin followed the tradition established by Berchem, using red chalk for most of his studies of characters and animals, but softening the lines while retaining their incisive and rapid character. In his genre scenes, Du Jardin combined Flemish teaching with the influence of the "Bamboccianti," the northern painters active in 17th-century Rome, whose precursor was Pieter Bodding van Laer (Haarlem, c. 1599 - c. 1641), known as Il Bamboccio.



Pieter van Lear, *Rest during the Hunt* - Warsaw, Narodowe Museum

<sup>1</sup> This name refers to a group of genre painters, generally from Flanders or the Netherlands, who were active in Rome between 1625 and the end of the 17th century.

<sup>2</sup> J. Killian, *The Paintings of Karel Dujardin (1626-1678): Catalogue raisonné*, Amsterdam 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Arnold Houbraken, *Groote Schouwburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 1721.

Settling in Rome in 1625, Van Laer became a central figure among the Dutch and Flemish painters of the Bentvueghels<sup>4</sup>. His painting is characterized by realistic and sometimes caricatural representations of everyday life in Rome, with scenes of brigands, travelers, markets, and hunters, often in small format, within the city walls or in the countryside. Emblematic of his style, *Rest during the Hunt*, kept at the Narodowe Museum in Warsaw and reproduced above, illustrates a moment of rest for hunters in an Italian landscape, with typical earthy colors, accentuated contrasts, and figures captured in motion.

The success of Du Jardin's work lies precisely in his choice to depict Italianate landscapes, combining them with picturesque characters, travelers, and shepherds, often represented in a grotesque manner, in the style of Van Laer. This figurative style is also present in the work of Jan Asselijn (Dieppe, c. 1610 - Amsterdam 1652/60), who was also an inspiration to Du Jardin. Asselijn lived in Rome between 1634 and 1644.

Very little information is available about Du Jardin before 1649, when he left for Lyon and married his landlady, Suzanne van Royen, in Paris in December of the same year, perhaps to clear his debts. At that time, he lived between Amsterdam and Paris, where he had the opportunity to study the work of French artists such as Sébastien Bourdon, Simon Vouet, Laurent de La Hyre, and Eustache Le Sueur. In October 1656, Du Jardin was active in The Hague, where he was one of the founding members of the *Pictura* artists' guild. In 1659, he returned to Amsterdam, where he began a period of success and renown. He was commissioned to paint portraits of the Dutch aristocratic and merchant elite as well as spectacular historical scenes, becoming one of the most popular and highest-paid artists of his time<sup>5</sup>.

The reasons for his departure for Italy in 1675 are unknown, perhaps in order to follow his friend Johann Reynst, or out of a desire to find new clients more interested in historical subjects. In Rome, he frequented the *Bentvueghels* group, where he was given the nickname *Barba di Becco* or "*Bokkebaart*." This period had a lasting influence on his work, which now included depictions of idealized landscapes of the Roman countryside, with their vast horizons and characters constructed with light, the result of meticulous research into chiaroscuro, as can be seen in his first Roman painting (reproduced below), dated "*fecit Roma 1675*," and in his lively genre scenes depicting everyday life in the City.

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<sup>4</sup> On this subject, see P. Schatborn, *Drawn to Warmth: 17th Century Artists in Italy*, Amsterdam 2001, pp. 154-160; I *Bamboccianti: Niederländische Malerrebellen im Rom des Barock*, Milan 1991, pp. 166-170.

<sup>5</sup> *Karel du Jardin 1626-1678*, catalog of the exhibition organized by J. Kilian (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, December 14, 2007-March 16, 2008), Amsterdam 2007, pp. 9-33.



**Karel du Jardin, *Travelers in an Italian Landscape*, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten**

After a stopover in Tangier, North Africa, he arrived in Venice in 1678, where he stayed with a German merchant in the parish of San Cassiano. There he fell seriously ill and was buried on October 9 of the same year.

## 2. Description of the drawing and related artworks

The drawing depicts a hunter kneeling down to load his rifle, while a young boy approaches him and timidly hands him the trophy of the hunt: the foot of the animal he has shot. The scene, depicted on a small sheet of paper, could be a preliminary study for a larger painting or print representing a larger and more complex hunting scene, executed in the Dutch figurative tradition of the mid-17th century.

Two figures in a similar pose appear in the print *Landscape with Ruins, Two Men and a Dog* by Du Jardin (1658), in which they are depicted from a distance and stripped of their hunting attributes, in an idyllic landscape dotted with ruins.





**Karel du Jardin**, *Landscape with Ruins, Two Men and a Dog*, 1658, print, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum (R1133)

Our hunter also bears a strong resemblance in his posture to the *Seated Man removing his Boots* in the Fogg Art Museum (circa 1657).



**Karel du Jardin**, *Seated Man removing his Boots*, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge

This seated man and our hunter, both carefully depicted, have the same expressiveness: they are shown in profile, with a wide hat casting a shadow over their faces, leaning toward the ground, left shoulder forward, in the Fogg drawing to remove his boot, in our drawing to hold his rifle.

In the Fogg Museum drawing, the red chalk is densely stumped to create deep shadows and light effects. In our drawing, it only defines the contours of the figures, which are sketched in a very expressive manner, but without any contextual elements (rocks, cast shadows, etc.). All this leads us to believe that we have here a red chalk sketch<sup>6</sup>. The presence of a touch of gray wash on the hunter's hat gives us an additional clue: this sketch was probably intended to be completed with gray ink wash. The Städel Museum's sheet, *A woman spinning, another woman seated in rear view, and a loaded donkey with its driver sleeping beside it*, provides a good illustration of Karel du Jardin's use of this technique: the gray is skillfully nuanced and enhanced by brown ink outlines on a preparatory sketch in red chalk.



**Karel du Jardin, *A woman spinning, another woman seated in rear view, and a loaded donkey with its driver sleeping beside it* – Städel Museum Frankfurt (z781)**

<sup>6</sup> The fact that it is only a sketch could explain the absence of any paintings or engravings featuring exactly the same characters.



While Du Jardin's painted and engraved work is significant, few of the studies and sketches on paper that he made for his compositions have survived. Most are animal studies, while studies of characters are very rare in the artist's corpus preserved or known to date.

### 3. Framing

Our drawing is presented in a period Louis XIII frame in carved and gilded wood decorated with foliage and scrollwork, which has largely retained its original gilding.



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