

**Stefano ORLANDI**

(Bologna, 1681 - 1760)

*LANDSCAPE OF ANCIENT RUINS WITH FIGURE*



ITALY

FIRST HALF OF 18TH CENTURY

OIL ON CANVAS

DIMENSIONS:

WITHOUT FRAME :  $37 \frac{7}{16} \times 53 \frac{3}{16}$  IN ; WITH FRAME :  $45 \frac{1}{2} \times 60 \frac{5}{8}$  IN

**27. Quai Voltaire. 75007 Paris**



Originally from Bologna, Stefano Orlandi, son of the painter and the sculptor Odoardo Orlandi (1660-1736) reflects the great tradition of the Bolognese School of architectural painters Quadraturisti, school of artists specializing in architectures feints decorations theater known throughout Europe. He trained alongside Pompeo Aldrovandini (1677-1735) with the painter Gioseffo Orsoni who taught him the « quadratura » and with whom he went to Rome.

The cultural life in Italy in the 1730s and particularly in Bologna is influenced by the baroque art on one hand with the reputation of the School of Carrache and on the other hand with the architecture and its decoration painters. Stefano Orlandi is influenced by the most famous of them, the painter of architecture Giuseppe Bibiena (1696-1757). He received private commissions from important families of Bologna such as Foresti or through the countess Gemma Martini Donati in Venice. He decorates with fresco palaces, temples and private chapels in different cities in Italy in particular two luxurious palaces in Bologna: the Palace Ranuzzi in collaboration with Gioseffo Orsoni and the Palace Aldrovandi. The later contained a gallery with cartouches and panels vault painted by Stefano Orlandi and figures by the famous Bolognese decorator painter Vittorio Bigari (1692-1776). Stefano Orlandi also executed works for the Martinengo's family in Brescia with Francesco Monti. His famous reputation permits him to participate in the main public orders received by the architect Filippo Juvarra.

We only know two oils on canvas executed by Stefano Orlandi currently preserved in the Southampton City Art Gallery in England depicting «The interior of a church with sacrifice on a altar blaze» and « Figures in an imagination architecture ». By their subject and their composition, these two paintings joined in every aspect our painting an original imagined architecture, a fashionable subject in 18th century in Italy.

The painting presented here, whimsical, imaginary, probably represents the ancient remains of a church or palace with a rocky landscape in the background and animated with figures in the foreground. By the reflected composition of the painting, the artist plays here with lighting effects: he associates a foreground subtly shaded to a background in full light.

The ruin is depicted here as a central and unique subject indicating a strong presence of the ancient time. Columns, capitals, arches, pediments, vases, busts and statues contribute to the creation of this artistic chaos and a theatrical effect. The vogue of architectural caprice, fanciful ruin and imaginary landscape perfectly illustrates this painting, which is one of the finest examples of the scenographic art of Stefano Orlandi.



The representation of the ruins in the painting is very fashionable in the 18th century in Italy. This interest is related to the discovery of Italy and especially Rome through the Grand Tour, a long travel realized by young people of the upper class of the European society, as well as Pompei and Herculaneum, recently discovered.

The travelers brought back as souvenirs of their expeditions Italian paintings of great precision and realism executed by Canaletto, Bellotto or Guardi, the great representatives of Vedutism (very prosperous pictorial genre in Italy, mainly in Venice, based on the perspective representation of urban landscapes). Giovanni Pannini (1691-1765) was the first vedutist to take an interest in ruin painting. His style will evolve later towards the representation of partially or totally imaginary landscapes known under the name of "capricci".

Like him, Stefano Orlandi was one of the great painters of palaces, architectural paintings and scenic decorations found in Bologna and in Rome during the first half of the 17th century.

The ruin is represented in 18th century as an allegory of the vanity of all things, submitted by the time to the degradation and to the fragmentation. Artists raise ruins to the status of models because they express at the same time the supreme empire of time but also its resistance in time passing. It allows meditating on the course of the world and is an invitation to think.

#### Bibliography :

Giancarlo SESTIERI, *Il Capriccio Architettonico in Italia nel XVII e XVIII secolo*, Rome, 2015, Tome , illustration 9, p.368-369.