

GIACOMO CERUTI

29 October - 13 December 2013, Milan



ROBILANT + VOENA Milan present an exhibition of a Settecento master: Giacomo Ceruti. Rediscovered in the twenties through the studies of Roberto Longhi, Giuseppe Delogu, Giovanni Testori and Mina Gregori, this artist is one of the main exponents of the “*pittura di realtà*” (painting of reality) in Eighteenth Century Lombardy. Thanks to loans from private collections, a distinct group of his works will be presented to the public, including previously unpublished paintings.

Born in Milan in 1698, in the first phase of his career Ceruti moved to Brescia, where he established himself as a portraitist. His interest in exploring in depth the daily life of the lower classes, and his works that featured the so-called “*pitocchi*” –beggars, spinners, vagrants, peasants and farmers– soon gained him the nickname of *Pitocchetto*. This tendency to depict a world of social outcasts and humble workers acquires a new, solemn dignity in the realistic, un-ironical, sometimes monumental canvases of Ceruti and is most highly represented in the *cycle of Padernello*.

During the 1730s, he worked between Padua and Venice, where he obtained a number of important commissions from some of the most distinguished collectors of the time, such as Marshal Matthias von der Schulenburg. From this moment on, the influence of Venetian painting will always be visible in the works of the painter, who, excluding a short stay in Piacenza, continued his career in Milan until his death in 1767.

During the years of his maturity Ceruti chose a more refined, elegant language, thus catching up with the contemporary cultural climate in Europe. The *Equestrian Portrait of the Marchese Orsini*, coming from villa Orsini di Mombello in Imbersago, well exemplifies the new internationality and worldliness of his painting and the loss of the rough naturalism of the first years. In the *Encounter at the well*, which was part of the decoration of Palazzo Busseti in Tortona, we can see how the same changes happen to his rural scenes. In the same way, the remarkable series of portraits of “types”, a very popular *genre* in Venice and France, qualifies Ceruti as a great interpreter of this tendency, typical of the Eighteenth Century.

Despite these stylistic changes the main lines of Ceruti’s painting remain very clear, consisting in his ability to represent reality around him with a frank, disenchanted eye and lucid rationality.

The exhibition catalogue is curated by Francesco Frangi and Alessandro Morandotti.

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