

LE CLAIRE

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FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE GOYA Y LUCIENTES

1746 Fuendetodos - Bordeaux 1828

Portrait of the painter Cesar Arbasia

Red chalk on laid paper.

Inscribed in red chalk in the lower border: *Cesar Arbasia. / Pint.*

174 x 126 mm

PROVENANCE: From the artist given to Don Juan Augustín Ceán Bermúdez, Sevilla (c.1798) – from whom purchased by Valentín Carderera – H. M. Calmann, London – R. E. Lewis – from whom purchased in 1963 by Dr. and Mrs. David Elterman – Christie's London, 24 January 2001, *Old Master Drawings*, lot 92 – acquired at the sale by the late Jan Krugier – thence by descent – Private collection, England.

LITERATURE: Xavier de Salas, 'Portraits of Spanish Artists by Goya', *The Burlington Magazine*, CVI, January 1964, pp. 16-19, fig. 6 – Pierre Gassier and Juliet Wilson, *Vie et Oeuvre de Francisco Goya, l'Œuvre complet illustré*, Fribourg, 1970, (English ed. London 1971), no. 698 – Pierre Gassier, *The Drawings of Goya, The Sketches, Studies and Individual Drawings*, London, 1975, p. 189, no. 150, repr.

EXHIBITION: Los Angeles, Grunwald Graphic Arts Foundation, *The Artist looks at Himself*, 1966

The present drawing is part of a series of portrait drawings, which were executed by Goya around 1798 to illustrate the *Dictionary of Spanish Painters* prepared by his close friend Juan Augustín Ceán Bermúdez (1749-1829). Ten of the known drawings portray Spanish artists of the 17th century, while an eleventh portrait, probably intended as a frontispiece, represents Bermúdez himself.¹ The dictionary was published in 1800 under the title *Diccionario Histórico de los mas ilustres profesores de las Bellas Artes en España*, but Goya's portraits were never engraved, and the book did not contain any illustrations.

The collector Don Valentín Carderera was the first to mention this group of drawings in an article published in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in 1860-3.² He added that it comprised about twelve or thirteen sheets. He himself owned ten drawings from the series, including the present sheet.

Cesar Arbasía, the subject of the present drawing, was an Italian painter, a pupil of Federico Zuccaro, whose portrait was to be included in this *Dictionary of Spanish Painters* because the artist worked in Spain, chiefly in Málaga and Cordoba, at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century. Ceán Bermúdez mentioned in his life of Arbasía '*un retrato dibujado al lapis por D. Juan de Alfaro consta haber fallecido en el año 1614*' [a portrait drawn in pencil by Don Juan de Alfaro, it is stated that he died in the year 1614], on which the present drawing is probably based.³ Pierre Gassier suggested that it is very likely

¹ The 11 known drawings from this series had been described in 1964 by X. de Salas, op. cit., and in 1975 by P. Gassier, op. cit., pp. 187-98, nos. 149-159.

² Valentín Carderera, 'François Goya – Sa Vie, ses Dessins et ses Eaux-fortes', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, VI, 1860, p. 215-227.

³ X. de Salas, op. cit., pp. 16 and 19.

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that Goya saw this drawing or a painting or print with a portrait of Arbasía, on which he could base his own likeness.

Like all the other portraits in this series the present drawing is carefully executed in red chalk, the background finished with delicate horizontal strokes which surround the bust portrait, very much imitating the effect of a print. Like the other portraits in this series, the present drawing is inscribed in block letters in the lower margin with the name of the artist depicted; this was rather necessary, as many of the artists that Goya represented in these portraits, including Arbasía, were not very well known masters.⁴

⁴The series includes portraits of the following artists: Cesar Arbasía, Alonso Cano, Pablo de Crespedes, Luis Fernández, Juan Fernández Navarette, Felipe Liaño, Pedro Roldán, Cornelio Schut, Luis de Vargas, and Francisco de Zurbarán. Other great Spanish artist, like Velásques, Murillo and Valdés Leal, are missing, or lost.