



IL GUERCINO

(Cento, 1591 - Bologna, 1666)

Two heads in profile

pen and brown ink

104 x 175 mm

Provenance:

Dr Charles Peters (1695 – c. 1746)

with Baskett and Day, London

where acquired by the present owner in September 1981

Engraved:

Arthur Pond, *Prints in Imitation of Drawings*, 1734–1736

This spirited drawing of two men in profile wearing hats discloses Guercino's concern for the everyday, and his aptitude for recording to paper his observations made from daily life. Guercino was a keen observer of human temperament and physiognomy, and he produced numerous caricatures and genre drawings like the present sheet to satiate this curiosity. Unlike Guercino's strict caricatures, which exaggerate features for the purpose of mockery, this drawing reflects a lighter sense of amusement rather than sheer derision. Here, Guercino draws on the tradition of the classical profile, which was typically employed by artists to convey the nobility of the sitter. He subverts the format and instead of evoking the idealised portraits of the two men, Guercino exaggerates the right-most figure's nose and the weariness of his hat. As Sir Denis Mahon and Nicholas Turner note, Guercino's drawings of this kind: "are remarkable for their informality and lack of staginess, and it is precisely this uncontrived naturalism that makes them seem so true to life." (Mahon and Turner 1989, p. 110).

We are grateful to Nicolas Turner who confirmed the attribution in a letter dated 29.11.1999.

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