

THE PRINCE OF FONDI HUNTING (1847)



Filippo Palizzi

(Vasto 1818 - 1899)

Misure: cm 52 x 37

Tecnica: Oil on canvas

signed lower right: "Fil. Palizzi 1847".

Provenance: Milano, Carraro collection

An artist from Abruzzo by birth and Neapolitan by adoption, Filippo Palizzi was, together with his brother Giuseppe, the forefather and creator of the revolutionary renewal of Italian painting towards realism, the prelude to Tuscan Macchiaioli painting. When he painted the full-length



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portrait of the Prince of Fondi on a hunting trip in 1848, he had already undertaken a series of journeys between Moldavia, Eastern Europe and Malta, documented in thick, precious notebooks. After a summer spent in Cava dei Tirreni, in the early months of 1848 he took part in the days of revolutionary uprisings in Naples and then spent a few months in his home town, Vasto, where he concentrated on figure paintings and scenes of traditional Abruzzese costume. A painter favoured by prestigious collectors, including the Bourbons, he was used to carrying out an intense activity as a portrait painter for them, which he combined with more important paintings dedicated to studies of animals and plants. Although he was already partly influenced by the innovative ideas of his brother Joseph, who had been in France since 1844 and was linked to the Barbizon School - even if he had not travelled to Paris yet, where he was to arrive in 1855 - in *The Prince Hunting*, he abandoned the rigidity of his younger years to achieve a “truth of light and colour”. Although the figure of the noble hunter was probably finished in the studio to meet the client's specific requirements, the naturalistic background is remarkable. Among the marshes, the tall, wild vegetation and the rendering of the clouds, he made sure to leave a perfect impression of truth, both through an atmospheric density and the effects of air and light on the plants. A masterful painter of animals, he combined his skill as a portrait painter with that of a knowledgeable expert on fauna, as can be seen from the hunting dog that accompanies the proud prince when posing. Anticipating some of his more famous hunting paintings executed in the 1850s, such as *The Fox Hunt* in the Marzotto Collection or *The Royal Family of Naples at the Pitti Palace*, *The Prince Hunting* provides valuable evidence of Palizzi's activity as a portrait painter, capable of combining subtle atmospheric effects with a talent for studying human poses and customs.

Bibliography

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