Bust - Lucrezia Donati

Object: Bust

Place of origin: Florence (made)

Date: ca. 1865 (made)

Artist/Maker: Bastianini, Giovanni, born 1830 - died 1868 (maker)

Materials and Techniques: Marble

Museum number: 38-1869

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

This is a marble bust made by Giovanni Bastianini in Florence, Italy in about 1865. The bust purports to represent Lucrezia Donati, the mistress of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Its style is a pastiche of that of the Florentine 15th century sculptor Mino da Fiesole, and at its first appearance it was declared to be the masterpiece of Mino by the art historian Cavalcaselle. The bust was exposed as a forgery by Dr. Alessandro Foresi in 1868, who acquired it at high price from Giovanni Freppa, and it was a forgery of exceptional quality that the V&A acquired for £84 (a price then comparable to that paid for genuine Renaissance pieces) in 1869.

From the mid-nineteenth century early Renaissance sculpture was in high demand and short supply. The Florentine dealer Freppa found a solution to this problem in the sculptor Bastianini, who worked for him from about 1850 to 1867. The well known art historian Cavalcaselle was overwhelmed when he saw the present bust and offered to place it on exhibition in the Bargello. Giovanni Bastianini (1830 – 1868) was an Italian sculptor who started as a stonemason in the quarries at Fiesole. Bastianini's name became famous in relation to his skillfull art forgery. Bastianini loved Renaissance sculpture and took this for his main inspiration. For Freppa he produced numerous neo-Renaissance works, most often busts and bas-reliefs in the style of Donatello, Verrocchio, Mino da Fiesole and other Italian masters.

Descriptive line

Bust, marble, Lucrezia Donati, by Giovanni Bastianini, forgery in the style of Mino da Fiesole, Italy (Florence), ca. 1865

Physical description

The hair of Donati, bound with a ribbon, falls in a pigtail behind her. Over her forehead a loop of pearls. She looks downwards, her head turned very slightly to the right. She is dressed in a close-fitting bodice with V-shaped neck. Inscribed.

Dimensions

Height: 45.7 cm

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Object history note

Acquired in Florence, from Dr. Alessandro Foresi in 1869.

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O93120/lucrezia-donati-bust-bastianini-giovanni/