

Franks Forage No 5A.

Frans Snyders.

Probably one of the more common comments by visitors in the Dining Room is 'What a gruesome picture to have to look at whilst having a meal' or similar! It depends of course on which side of the table one sits. However, it would not have provoked such a comment during Victorian times, in fact it would be quite normal for such a painting in the dining rooms of the nobility.

Mary Elizabeth herself purchased the painting as being suitable for her new Dining Room.¹



Frans Snyders (1579-1657) may be a less familiar name than some of his contemporaries but he was well respected in his day as a painter of wildlife. He initially painted subjects of still life and later turned to painting animals and became skilled in depicting scenes of hunting and animal combat. Rubens admired his skill in the painting of wildlife and engaged him to paint animals, fruit and still life in his own paintings as did other artists of the day. He was also a friend of Van Dyck who painted him (left) and his wife on several occasions.

Snyders was born and died in Amsterdam and studied under Pieter Brueghel the Younger and Hendrick van Balen, the first master of Van Dyck. He visited Italy in 1608-9 and in 1611 married Margaretha, the sister of another animal painter Paul de Vos. He was appointed principal painter to Archduke Albert of Austria, governor of the Low Countries for whom he executed some of his finest works. He was commissioned by Philip III of Spain and his successor Philip IV to paint subjects of the chase. Below are some of his paintings which bear a likeness to that in the Charlecote Dining Room.²

I would suggest that the Charlecote painting is one of the more important and valuable in the house. It would take more than that picture to put me off my dinner.

Frank Storr



Above are other paintings by Snyders in similar vein.

Notes

1. Charlecote Dining Room Folder from family records
2. http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Frans_Snyders. www.visual-arts-cork.com/old-masters/frans-snyders.htm