

1912-10-10

SENDER

Martin Birnbaum

RECIPIENT

Jens Ferdinand Willumsen

FACTS

Document type:

Letter

Sender's location:

New York (USA)

Recipient's location:

Hellerup (Danmark)

Mentioned people:

El Greco

Francisco Goya

A. C. Mohr

Jens Thiis

Jacopo Tintoretto

Archive:

J.F. Willumsens Museum

Arkivkasse: C/III/6 - GrecoBogen

OMTALTE VÆRKER

- El Greco: *Hyrdernes tilbedelse* (ca. 1568-1569) tempera på træ, 63 x 76 cm. F. Willumsen Museum, G.S. 345 Evt.: Goya: *Hoved af en mand* (udat.) oliefarve på træ, 14.3 x 12.4 cm. F. Willumsen Museum, G.S. 48 k/oaBN)



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BERLIN LONDON

CABLE ADDRESS:-WIZARD, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE MURRAY HILL 1464

NEW YORK, Oct. 10, 1912

305 MADISON AVENUE
Bet. 41st and 42nd Sts.

Mr. J. F. Willumsen,
Strandagervej 28,
Hellerup, Denmark.

Dear Mr. Willumsen:-

Your letter of the 30th ultimo has just reached me. I may add that, Mr. Jens This, Director of the Museum in Christiania has sent me a valuable Tintoretto upon the receipt of a cablegram similar to the one sent you.

In answer to your inquiry, One of the American museums wishes to purchase your Greco if they are satisfied with it after seeing it. I would not send for this picture if the museum had not asked me to cable for it, but I am not in a position to go to a large expense with regard to your pictures. The Photographische Gesellschaft of Berlin, Germany, which I represent is responsible, not only for a picture of \$43,000.00, but for any other sum and it is as the agent of the Photographische Gesellschaft, ^{I am its American representative} that I am acting. If you have any doubt as to the responsibility of our house, kindly inquire of Mr. A. G. Mohr, Norresogade 37, Copenhagen. He will tell you what a responsible, conservative, old house I represent. We do not ordinarily deal in oil paintings and I am trying to sell this picture merely to keep my promise to you. If you are unwilling to intrust it to my charge,

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Oct. 10, 1912

-2- Mr. J. F. Willumsen.

after you insure it against risks of transportation, I am afraid I shall be obliged to drop the whole matter.

I cannot sell the Goya for any price such as you ask and it would be useless for you to send it to me. I cannot even receive \$1000.00 for it, nor could I obtain \$40,000. for the Greco. You distinctly told me that you wanted 100,000. crowns and I gave the price as \$30,000.00 and also added that I might be able to get it for less. At any rate I would have to have my commission from this ^{last} amount and unless you feel that this can be done I would not care to have you send the picture.

As I intimated in my last letter, I know all the collectors here and I think I can sell the picture if your price will be within reason. You will be best able to judge.

I do not think that the director of the museum can take such a trip as you suggest for the sake of one picture, for the large dealers in New York have the most extraordinary collection from which they can choose, including a number of Greco's of world wide fame. It is only my enthusiasm for your picture which has made this director interested in it and I also have two private persons interested, but I regret to say that, relying upon our conversation last summer I told them all that our price would be about \$30,000.00.

Hoping you will feel free to send on the picture with this understanding, I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

Martin Birnbaum
Manager.



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CABLE ADDRESS:-WIZARD, NEW YORK
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NEW YORK, Nov. 1, 1912

305 MADISON AVENUE
Bet. 41st and 42nd Sts.

Mr. J. F. Willumsen,
Strandagervej 28,
Hellerup, Denmark.

Dear Mr. Willumsen:-

I received your kind letter and also the copy of the certificates regarding the authenticity of the Greco. I am afraid I must have misunderstood you and I very much regret the error, if I made one. My recollection, as I stated in previous letters, was that you had been offered \$20,000.00 for the Greco but that you refused to let it go under 100,000. Crowns. At any rate I made the mistake of offering your picture to several people and they seemed interested on the strength of the photograph. It would, however, effect my position as a dealer to offer the picture at a new price.

If the work were in New York I might be able to interest some new clients at the price you demand for it, but I should not care to make any further attempts in this direction without having the picture here and the chance of selling the painting for \$40,000.00 is so slight that I would not ask you to run the risk of expending money on its insurance and transportation. Should you ever feel inclined to trust me with the picture and pay for its transportation and insurance I shall

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-2- Mr. J. F. Willumsen.

do my best to dispose of it for you. I may add that, the mere fact that Grecos have been sold for enormous prices does not make the task of selling another one at a high price a simple matter.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Birnbaum
Manager.