

1912-10-04

SENDER

Martin Birnbaum

RECIPIENT

Jens Ferdinand Willumsen

FACTS

Document type:

Letter

Sender's location:

New York (USA)

Recipient's location:

Hellerup (Danmark)

Mentioned people:

Henry Clay Frick

El Greco

Francisco Goya

William Rothenstein

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 El Greco: *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (ca. 1605-10) olie på lærred, 144.5 x 101.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. nr.: 05.42 Evt.: Goya: *Hoved af en mand* (udat.) oliefarve på træ, 14.3 x 12.4 cm. F. Willumsen Museum, G.S. 48  (k/GLk8)



BERLIN PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPANY
(PHOTOGRAPHISCHE GESELLSCHAFT)
FINE ART PUBLISHERS
BERLIN LONDON

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

NEW YORK, Oct. 4, 1912

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

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

Dear Mr. Willumsen:-

Your letter of September 20th has just reached me and I was very much surprised to read its contents. I have already offered the Greco to several people for \$25,000.00, which is about 100,000 Crowns. This is the price you asked when I was in Copenhagen and I think it is a very good price for an early Greco. Early Grecos may be rarer but they are certainly not the ones which are wanted. However, it is for you to say what you are willing to sell the picture for, but I am very sorry if you have sent it to me, as requested in my cablegram, for I will not offer it at ~~the~~ new price. I assumed that my commission would be upon the \$25,000 price and I can still tell people the price has been increased a trifle, but they would not listen to me if I asked any price like \$40,000.00. I have myself seen a very fine Greco in New York City offered for \$20,000.00. If you saw the picture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art I am quite sure that you would not compare yours with it, even though yours is a beautiful example. If you have already sent the picture, please cable to me at once and tell me definitely what is the lowest price for which I may sell it. I have

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no customer at present, but I have some people who are interested in the picture and if I can get more than the price you cable I shall do so and you will derive the benefit from it. If you send it, please send ^{copies of} ~~the~~ letters of Beruete and any other ^{authorities} along with it by registered mail.

The price you charge for the Goya is also different from the price you mentioned when I visited you. I cannot get any price near \$3000.00 for this picture. I believe I told you that I have sold a Goya painted on ivory for \$280.00, from which I deducted my commission. This picture is an authentic Goya and is illustrated in Rothenstein's book on that master, and if you wish to purchase it I am sure the present owner would part with it for \$600.00. ^(Perhaps less) If you will look at the picture in the said book you will readily admit that it is finer than yours and as there is no doubt whatever about the history of that picture it is undoubtedly worth more.

Mr. Frick is only one of a number of people who would be interested in these pictures, but you must not be misled by newspaper accounts of what Americans pay for their paintings. I know of one case where the price paid by a Philadelphia millionaire was said ^{in the newspapers} to be \$500,000.00 and I have heard on good authority that the actual price paid for that picture was \$45,000.00.

I cannot yet tell you about our lithograph exhibition. Much will depend upon the way the season starts, but we shall have plenty of time before the Spring to consider and arrange this exhibition.

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New York

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My cable address is WIZARD NEW YORK, as explained in my last letter, which, of course, you had not received at the time you sent me your letter of September 20th.

Anxiously waiting to hear from you, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Martin Birnbaum

Manager.