

Watermarks and Artistic Practices: Drawings by the Neoclassical Artists Andrea Appiani and Giuseppe Bossi in the Brera Academy of Fine Arts Collection

Chiara Palandri (chiara.palandri@nb.no), Elisa Albano

Abstract

This presentation explores the drawing collections of Andrea Appiani (1754–1817) and Giuseppe Bossi (1777–1815) in the Brera Academy of Fine Arts, which serve as emblematic representations of Neoclassical artistic practices in Northern Italy. Particular attention is given to the material characteristics of papers and their role in the creative process. As part of the IartNET project—an international platform dedicated to artistic practice, research, and cultural heritage within Italian higher arts education institutions—this study examines the papers and watermarks in these collections. The project aims to analyze the relationships between the depicted subjects, the types and quality of papers, and the artistic techniques used, with the goal of reconstructing original notebooks and paper formats. This research will contribute to the field through the digital cataloging of the collection and the integration of data, offering new perspectives on Appiani and Bossi's work, while establishing a replicable model for future studies of Brera's historical collections. Furthermore, the presentation will explore the potential of these studies and methods to bridge historical materials with contemporary research. This integrated approach highlights the role of watermarks in understanding paper use in Neoclassical drawing practices and the broader implications for art history and material cultures.