



Exhibition of a Rhinoceros at Venice

Date

1875-1900

Primary Maker

Unknown artist

Medium

Gelatin silver print

Description

Photograph depicting Longhi's 1751 painting, "Exhibition of a Rhinoceros at Venice." In 1751, a rhinoceros known as Miss Clara was publicly exhibited at the Venice Carnival, creating a sensation across Europe. She was the subject of poems, paintings, tapestries, medals and sculptures; ladies even styled their hair in the shape of a horn. Pietro Longhi painted this picture around the same time. In a rather solemn scene, Miss Clara stands in a simple enclosure, languidly munching on hay. She no longer has her horn – the showman holds it in one hand, along with a whip to encourage the animal to move for the spectators, many of whom have masked faces. The background is limited to one wooden wall, but our attention is drawn to different textures: the black lace worn by the woman in the front and the silk dresses of those behind, and the rhino's rough, dark skin.

Dimensions

Overall: 11 1/4 x 8 5/8 in. (28.6 x 21.9 cm)