

DAVID TUNICK, INC.

PRINTS & DRAWINGS

HANS BALDUNG GRIEN (1484/5-1545)

The Conversion of Saint Paul

Date: ca. 1515/16
Medium: Woodcut
Dimensions: 293 x 190 mm. 11 x 7 in.
Reference: Hollstein 125, only state
Watermark: None visible
Provenance: William M. Ivins, Jr. (1881-1961), first curator of prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; By descent to his daughter, Barbara Ivins; 1987 to David Tunick, Inc.; to Private collection, New York
Impression: Superb, early, dark impression
Condition: Excellent, with thread margins all around; an extremely faint horizontal crease, visible verso only, restoration at the left corners

Saul of Tarsus is shown on the road to Damascus on a Roman mission to destroy a small Christian community. Blinded by "a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun", he is thrown from his horse, instantly converts, and becomes a missionary. When later martyred, he is called Saint Paul. (Acts 26:13-14)

The angst of twentieth century German Expressionism is presaged in this sixteenth century woodcut - in the physical press of human and animal figures, in the unstable strain of diagonal versus horizontal line, in the contortion, agitation, and frenzy. Baldung developed his own unmistakable style despite the powerful influence of his great master, Albrecht Dürer. Alan Shestack describes the extent to which Baldung became a highly important artist in his own right (*Hans Baldung Grien*, Yale University, 1981, pp. 3-18); also, Heinrich Wölfflin's *The Sense of Form in Art* (New York, 1958, translated from *Italien und das deutsche Formgefühl*, Munich, 1931) refers to Baldung more than any other artist in support of the author's thesis regarding the "Germanness" of German art.

A rare print, earlier than any other impression we know, before the breaks that occur early in the printing of the block. For example, in the Munich impression illustrated in Curjel (*Hans Baldung Grien*, Munich, 1923, pl. 4), compare the rump of the horse and the striations in the clouds; the Hollstein reproduction is difficult to read, but the break in the borderline on the left has not yet occurred in our impression. Three or four impressions have been on the market in the last twenty years, all printed later than ours. One of the powerful images of sixteenth century German art, which can only be fully appreciated in an impression as early as this one - from the Ivins collection.