

# AUTHENTICATION IN ART

AiA Art News-service

ANTIQUES TRADE  
**gazette**  
THE ART MARKET WEEKLY

## The case of the missing eyebrow – rediscovery of 'lost' painting reveals Nelson's battle scars

Dealer Philip Mould has discovered a painting of Lord Nelson (1758-1805) that reveals the hero's true war wounds that were hidden under over-paint for 100 years.



Portrait of Vice-Admiral Horatio Nelson, 1st Viscount Nelson KB (1758-1805) by Leonardo Guzzardi (active 1798-1800).



- Laura Chesters
- 13 Nov 2017

It had most recently been in an American private collection but its whereabouts were unknown to the wider market for the best part of a century.

It will now be offered at Mould's gallery in London following its unveiling at a launch of former Sotheby's auctioneer Martyn Downer's new book *Nelson's Lost Jewel* which features the painting.

The portrait is believed to have been painted in Italy in 1799 by Leonardo Guzzardi (active 1798-1800), and was created six years before the fateful battle of Trafalgar.

Mould described the picture as a "painfully honest portrayal of the naval hero following the recent amputation of his arm, the loss of sight in one eye, and the severe head wound at the battle of the Nile just weeks before which forced him to wear his hat thrust back to lessen the pain".

The gallery believes that at some point during the 20th century a restorer painted in Nelson's lost right eyebrow.

Mould says: "This was like reversing plastic surgery to reveal lost history. Seeing the scar emerge was a remarkable moment – Nelson the human replaced the more heroic projection. It was not uncommon for unsophisticated restorers in the last century to believe they were 'improving' original works with their own paint brush, only to disguise their authenticity and distinction in the process."

### *Provenance*

Lawrence Hendra, Mould's head of research, investigated the provenance of the painting and confirmed it is the missing painting. It was owned in Italy in a private collection and sold to an art dealer called Thomas Gullick by 1882. By 1897 it was sold to Alfred Morrison and then later to George M Juergens in New York. It was then bought from the estate of Juergens by an American collector in 1987.

Downer said: "The rediscovery of the long-lost Nelson is of huge significance and adds to our understanding of Nelson's troubled state of mind in the months after the Battle of the Nile when he embarked on a scandalous love affair and became embroiled in a violent and bitter revolution. For me, it is the most psychologically satisfying and rewarding of all the very many portraits of the admiral."

The Battle of the Nile, also known as the Battle of Aboukir Bay, was fought in 1798 between the Royal Navy, led by Nelson, and France's navy in the Mediterranean, off the coast of Egypt.

Philip Mould has not disclosed the price of the artwork.