

Arts, Briefly

NEWS FROM THE CULTURAL WORLD

Charles Ray Unveils Sculpture in Rome

Mention the name of the American artist Charles Ray, and Italy holds its breath. Mr. Ray made waves in that country in 2013 when his “Boy With Frog,” a hypernaturalistic eight-foot-tall sculpture, was removed from the Punta della Dogana in Venice because of protests on the part of residents, who demanded the return of a displaced lamppost there, a favorite smooching spot.

In his sculpture debut in Rome on Thursday, Mr. Ray showed “Mountain Lion Attacking a Dog,” which he developed at the American Academy in Rome, where he is the spring 2017 Deenie Yudell artist in residence. Reaction so far has been muted, perhaps because the work is in a private space, not a public one.

The piece is on exhibit at the academy, along with “Shoe Tie”

(2012). Mr. Ray said those two sculptures had been informed by two works of antiquity from the Capitoline Museums in Rome that he saw “at different times at the Getty” museum in California, where he lives. One is a fourth-century B.C. sculpture of a lion attacking a horse; the other is a first-century B.C. bronze showing a boy plucking a thorn from his foot. “For me, those works were really enjoyable,” he said during a public lecture at the academy on Thursday.

For many years, Mr. Ray has taken long predawn walks in the Santa Monica Mountains, “thinking about the mountain lions” and how they kill by jumping on the backs of their prey. This formed the narrative to both works, he said: The dog is mauled by the lion, and the young boy, in tying his shoe, exposes his neck, leaving himself vulnerable.

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