

 <p>Kunsthalle Bremen - Der Kunstverein in Bremen [CC BY-NC-SA]</p>	<p>Object: Oriental Magician, Leaning against a Sphinx</p> <p>Museum: Kunsthalle Bremen Am Wall 207 28195 Bremen (04 21) 3 29 08-0 info@kunsthalle-bremen.de</p> <p>Collection: Kupferstichkabinett</p> <p>Inventory number: 1997/110</p>
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Description

Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's drawing *Oriental Magician, Leaning against a Sphinx* was most likely done shortly after he finished his extensive fresco cycle in the Würzburg Residenz. But the picture motif is rather redolent of the artist's native Venice, which had maintained close trading ties with Africa and Asia since the 12th century. Exotically dressed merchants and dignitaries had already influenced the painting of Gentile Bellini, and, elsewhere, gave flight to Shakespeare's imagination. This drawing shows an old man in Oriental costume, leaning against a piece of furniture adorned with a sphinx. In Ancient Greece, the sphinx was regarded as a demon of death. The drawing is characteristic of Tiepolo's hand in the 1750s. The figure has been outlined in reed pen, drawn in fluid strokes, for the most part, uninterrupted, and elegantly committed to paper. With a wet brush, the composition was then given a generous application of wash and light brown ink that simultaneously models the figure with light. Though the drawing is today deemed to be as an autonomous work of art, it was certainly not intended as such originally. Rather, we must assume, also because of the two sketches of a warrior on the back of the drawing, that these were part of a pattern book that aided Tiepolo in the preparation of larger works of art.

Basic data

Material/Technique:	Pen and brush washed in brown and light brown
Measurements:	263.0 x 179.0 mm

Events

Drawn	When	1755
	Who	Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770)

Where

Keywords

- Bildmotiv
- Drawing
- Magier
- Sketch