

Camillo Verno, *Death and the Maiden*
1870 – Rusa di Campertogno - 1942

oil on canvas, *circa* 1900
24 ½ by 20 1/8 inches (63 by 51 cm.)
signed lower right: 'C. Verno'

provenance: Private collection, Germany;
with Galerie Konrad Bayer, Munich

exhibited: La Societa 'Promotrici di Belle Arti, Genoa 1915, there titled "Ruit hora".
Galerie Konrad Bayer, Munich 2014: "Images of Love and Death", listed and
illustrated in the exhibition catalogue #3, and as cover illustration of the
publication.

note: With *Death and the Maiden* Camillo Verno presents the viewer with a classic
vanitas or *memento mori* portrait. Painted *circa* 1895, the young woman, quite
possibly the artist's wife and model, is embraced from behind by a leering
skeleton, clearly symbolic of the shortness and fragility of human life and the
inevitability of death.

Death and the Maiden was a common motif in Renaissance art and finds its
roots in the *Danse Macabre*, an artistic genre of allegory of the Late Middle
Ages on the universality of death (fig. 1). No matter one's station in life, the
Danse Macabre unites us all. The German artist Hans Baldung famously
depicted the subject of Death and the Maiden several times in his career (fig.
2). The theme was revived in the arts during the Romantic era, and variants of
the subject occur in well-known self-portraits by such contemporary artists of
Verno as Hans Thoma (fig. 3) and Arnold Böcklin (fig. 4).

Camillo Verno was born near the Swiss border in the northern Italian village of
Rusa di Campertogno. He studied at the Albertina Academy in Turin and made
his artistic debut in the Societa Promotrice delle Belle Arti of 1891. Verno then
competed at the Exposizioni Nazionali in Turin, Milan, Florence, and Rome as
well as at the Internazionali held in Munich, London, and Barcelona. He
obtained many distinctions and won bronze, silver, and gold medals.

Verno was a member of the Accademia Albertina, professor at the Neopolitan
Institute of Fine Arts, a teacher at the Modena Academy, and Director of the
Adolfo Venturi Institute of Art in Modena. Verno died in his birth town of Rusa
di Campertogno in 1942.



Fig. 1

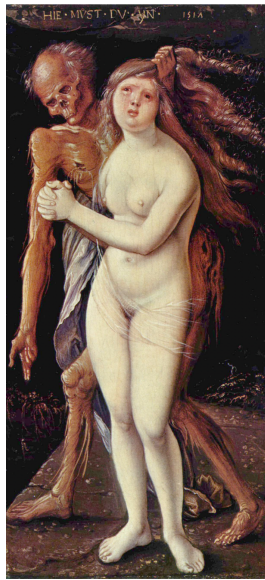


Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4