

The Creation of the Animals

1760-1790

Ink on paper

Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1715-1790) after Raphael (1483-1520)

JJ.2006.30



This engraving of Raphael's *The Creation of the Animals* was done by French engraver, Charles Nicolas Cochin. Born in Paris, Cochin studied engraving under his father, of the same name, and was a Parisian engraver for over 50 years. Starting in 1737, he was employed by King Louis XV to make engravings to commemorate every birth, marriage, and funeral at the King's court. He made over 1600 engravings during his lifetime, including historical subjects, book illustrations and portraits in pencil and crayon.

The original artwork was done by the renown Italian Renaissance artist, Raphael. Along with Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, he is considered one of the great masters of that period. The original fresco was commissioned by Pope Julius II for the Vatican and was part of a series that Raphael did that is found on the second floor of the Pope's private residence.

The print is an oblong, hexagonal plate. In the middle, God is standing with outstretched arms, surrounded by both real and fantastical animals, all in various phases of creation, (including horses, a crab, unicorns, a dinosaur, etc.). There is a lion in the foreground standing beside God. Lions frequently were used as a symbol in Christian iconography beginning in the 12th century; in some cases, it was meant to symbolize Christ himself. The writing at the bottom reads, in Latin, *“Let the Earth Bring Forth Every Living Creature After its Kind – Genesis, Chapter 1”*. The lower left of the plate is inscribed with R.V.I., for Raphael Di Urbino Inventi; and the lower right is inscribed N.C.F. 4, for Nicolas Cochin Fecit 4, (meaning, Raphael originally did it and Cochin made the print).

While the print is not of or by a family member, it is a religious subject matter which would have made it an appropriate print for Jay to have in his home.