JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

A fishing vessel making for shore in squally seas

JOHN THOMAS SERRES

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REF: 374758

Height: 26.7 cm (10.5")

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London, England

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Width: 36.5 cm (14.4")

Framed Height: 36 cm (14.2")

Framed Width: 44 cm (17.3")

Description

JOHN THOMAS SERRES 1759-1825English School A fishing vessel making for shore in squally seas Oil on canvas, signed 26.7 x 36.5 cms10½ x 143/8 inchesOverall framed size 36 x 44 cms 141/8 x 171/4 ins

John Thomas Serres was a noted painter of sea and shipping, marine battles and landscapes who achieved considerable professional success in his lifetime.

He was born in London in December 1759 and was the elder son of the Marine Artist to George III, Dominic Serres. The latter had been born to a good family near Auch in Gascony and to escape his family's intentions of his joining the priesthood, had run away to sea. His ship had been captured by the English, possibly at the end of the War of Austrian Succession (1741-48). He spoke English well and quickly established himself as a marine painter, aided by his friendship with Charles Brooking. With his charming manner and marked artistic ability, he became a significant painter of marines and was a founder member of the Royal Academy in 1768.

The Seven Years War (1756-1763) aroused much interest in the English public with the ensuing demand for paintings which depicted current scenes and events and Serres Snr was ideally placed to satisfy this demand, not only through paintings but also by entering a joint venture with print makers. This artistic talent and business acumen he passed on to his sons John Thomas and Dominic the Younger and both were taught by him. However, apart from the three members of the Serres family mentioned so far, this remarkable family comprised ten painters in all and included, Miss A.E., Miss H and Miss Joanna among others.

When John Thomas reached the age of twenty, he joined the Maritime School based in Chelsea as Drawing Master. This new establishment was founded in 1777 by the international traveller and merchant Jonas Hanway who used his fortune to provide for charitable causes. The base was in Ormonde House, Paradise Row and had a fully-rigged vessel in the garden for eleven year old boys to gain expertise in rigging and masts to provide sufficient training for them to enter the navy as midshipmen. Drawing was seen as a required skill of all naval cadets at that time and Serres' annual salary of £50 was a substantial income and reflected the importance of the post. In addition, John Thomas was also giving private drawing lessons and building an influential network of contacts so, when he progressed to maritime painting, there was a ready source of commissions.

John Thomas was strongly influenced by the Romantic Movement and, most particularly by one of the principal painters of that style, Philippe de Loutherburg. Serres began his career as a landscape painter and in this discipline exceeded his father. He first exhibited at the Royal Academy aged only seventeen, showing "A View of the Queen's Palace", the artist being credited as Master Serres. He remained as an Honorary Exhibitor at the RA until 1779 and from 1780 onwards he was a professional painter.

In 1793, upon the death of his father, he succeeded him in being ap...

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