

JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

## A View of the Canal of Fontainebleau

JOHN INIGO RICHARDS

Sold



## Description

Circle of JOHN INIGO RICHARDS 1731-1810 English School A View of the Canal of Fontainebleau  
Oil on canvas, inscribed 59.5 x 121 cms 23 3/8 x 47 5/8 inches Overall framed size 71.3 x 132.7 cms  
28 1/8 x 52 1/4 ins

John Inigo Richards was a London artist, born there in 1731 and dying in the same city 18th December 1810. He studied painting at the St. Martin's Lane Academy where he was taught by the renowned scenographer and topographical and imaginary landscape artist George Lambert (1700-1765) who has earned the sobriquet "Founder of British Landscape Painting".

Richards quickly established a reputation as a scene painter in the theatres of London, a route taken by the eminent history, genre and portrait painter Francis Hayman (c.1708-1776) when he started out as an artist. Hayman had worked principally at Drury Lane but Richards' main employer was the Covent Garden theatre, as it had been also for George Lambert, and Richards started there in 1759. An associate painter at Covent Garden was Giovanni Battista Cipriani, an Italian-born artist who became a significant force behind the English neo-Classical style. In spite of progressing on to other genres of painting, Richards never lost his enthusiasm for theatre design and was principal painter at Covent Garden between 1777 and 1803, succeeding Nicholas Thomas Dall in that position.

In his other guise as a landscape artist, Richards was chiefly a painter of topographical and decorative landscapes. He depicted scenes in the West Country, Kent, Sussex and Surrey as well as in Wales and Ireland as well as Italy but it is doubtful that he ever visited the latter, probably taking inspiration from other Grand Tour paintings or prints. These were sent from addresses in Soho, Covent Garden, Long Acre and Hoxton to exhibitions at the Royal Academy, the Society of Artists of Great Britain and the Free Society of Artists from 1762 to 1800. Titles include: "A View in Rome", "The Colosseum", "A View of part of the remains of Battle Abbey, Sussex", "View of a Cascade at Hester Combe in Somersetshire" and "Nymphs bathing". He also painted commission work for wealthy patrons - such as "Cowick Hall, Yorkshire, seen from the North with the Family of the 3rd Viscount Downe in Conversation on the Lawn" - which were not shown at the London exhibitions. These elegant topographical scenes show the influence of Canaletto which had beset English painting with the way the staffage was portrayed and in the airiness of the landscape.

John Inigo Richards was one of the thirty-four founder members of the Royal Academy together with such important artists as Reynolds, Gainsborough, Zuccarelli, Zoffany, Benjamin West, Angelica Kauffman and Richard Wilson when it was inaugurated on 10th December 1768. He became Secretary of the RA in 1788, remaining in the post until his death. In 1795 the Academy paid Richards twelve guineas to carry out conservation work on Leonardo da Vinci's "Virgin and Child with St Anne and John the...