JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

Elegant figures promenading before a house in a parkland setting

J H KRAMER

£ POA

London, England

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REF: 355068

Height: 76.6 cm (30.2")

Width: 93.8 cm (36.9")

Framed Height: 105.5 cm (41.5")

Framed Width: 134 cm (52.8")

Description

J H KRAMER Exhib. 1765-1775English SchoolElegant figures promenading before a house in a parkland setting Oil on canvas, signed and inscribed pinxit and dated 177* 76.6 x 93.8 cms30¼ x 367/8 inchesOverall framed size 105.5 x 134 cms 41½ x 52¾ inches

J H Kramer was an 18th century artist who was best known as a portrait painter but occasionally produced landscapes.

There is nothing known about his life and the only evidence of his career is the record of paintings that he exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Society of Artists between 1765 and 1775. Between 1765 and 1768, he sent three paintings to the Society of Artists, one of which was a landscape and the other two bore the same title of "Portrait of an Artist". These were entered from two different addresses: 'At Mr Rummer's in Denmark Street' and 'At Mr Ham's, without Temple Bar'.

In 1775, he sent two works to the Royal Academy: one was a portrait and the other titled "A landscape from nature". The address that he gave to the RA in this instance was 'At Dr Rowley's, Castle Street, Leicester Square'.

The fact that he did not supply an address of his own is, although not unique, certainly intriguing. Rather like a poste restant address, it implies that he may not have been a permanent London resident, either coming to the capital for commissions from further afield in England or possibly even being from the continent. This painting shows the influence of 17th Dutch artists of townscapes such as Gerrit Berkheyde and Jan van der Heyden and the 18th century Isaac Ouwater. These carefully constructed architectural scenes were much prized in the Netherlands and with the Dutch influence which came into this country following the accession of William III, which manifested itself in garden design and buildings as well as in other aspects of the arts.

Bibliography: The Dictionary of British 18th Century Painters - Ellis Waterhouse
Dictionary of British Landscape Painters - Maurice Grant

This painting shows a substantial house which we have not been able to locate. Suggestions of areas where it once stood have included Blackheath, Richmond or the area around Catford.
It depicts a house which is making a statement with the abundance of lighting and the decoration so could well be someone from the mercantile classes announcing his status. It is probably the owner and his family who are depicted in the foreground.

The railings are interesting in that, at that time, the grandest houses might be decorated with white lead and then dusted with smalt, a mixture of blue cobalt and ground glass which gave ironwork a bright and lustrous finish. This was first used in a Georgian square in 1735 for the perimeter of Lincoln Inn Fields.

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