JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

Gundogs in a Gameroom

GEORGE ARMFIELD

Sold

London, England

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REF: 175661

Description

GEORGE ARMFIELD Circa 1808 - 1893English SchoolGundogs in a Gameroom Oil on canvas, signed and dated 185971.5 x 91.8 cms28¼ x 361/8 inches Overall framed size 90 x 108.6 cms
353/8 x 423/4 inches Possibly the painting exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1859 no. 655, “Interior; with Dogs”

George Armfield was probably the most prolific dog painter of the nineteenth century and one of the best known. He painted dogs almost exclusively and produced innumerable charming scenes of field sports with terriers surrounding rabbit holes, spaniels putting up mallard, ratting terriers, and groups of sporting dogs in interiors. Interior scenes included both barn and game rooms as well as more domesticated and luxurious settings where a small beribboned spaniel curled up on top of a large barrel is often featured. A few early subjects also include "The Dying Stag," "The Wolf and the Lamb" and several fox paintings with dead pheasants or badgers. As M H Grant writes of him "…this painter delighted Victorian collectors and sportsmen…"

George Armfield was born in Wales in the early years of the nineteenth century, although the precise date has not been established but during his working life was a London-based artist and lived in turn in Camberwell, Hampstead, Clapham, Wandsworth, Brixton, and Blackfriars. He was the son of an artist, and apparently had a brother, William, who also followed in their fathers footsteps, and was sent to Rome to pursue his art education.

Armfield was apprenticed to a fishing tackle maker, but left before the end of his apprenticeship to devote himself to art. He quickly became a successful painter, and from the age of 16 his works were much in demand. He kept a horse from this time, and married when he was 17 or 18. He had no children from this first marriage, but his second wife bore him a daughter, and when he married for the third time, a further twelve children were born.

Initially, George Armfield signed and exhibited his work as G A Smith, but changed this by omitting his proper surname and utilising his middle name in its stead when he exhibited the first of his paintings at the British Institution in 1839. For this inaugural showing of his work, Armfield entered two pictures entitled "Study of a Dogs Head" and "Terrier Chasing a Rabbit." The following year his work began to appear regularly in issues of Sporting Magazine. In 1840 Armfield began to exhibit at the Royal Academy and his work was also shown at the Royal Society of British Artists in Suffolk Street. He continued to exhibit regularly over the next twenty years and some other titles include: "The Game Keepers", "The Warrener", "The Pet Puppy", "Reynard disturbed", "The Larder invaded", "Don, a celebrated Dog of the Artist", "View near the Vale of Glamorgan" and "Terriers and Hedgehog". Throughout his life, he s...

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