JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

A panoramic view from the avenue of a country house in a formal park setting with an oval pool and figures and cattle in the foreground

Sold

ENGLISH SCHOOL 1740S



REF: 374836

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Height: 139.7 cm (55")

Width: 180.3 cm (71")

Description

ENGLISH SCHOOL 1740sA panoramic view from the avenue of a country house in a formal park setting with an oval pool and figures and cattle in the foregroundOil on canvas 139.7 x 180.3 cms55 x 70 inchesOverall framed size 155.5 x 196.5 cms 611/4 x 773/8 insEx Collection: The Messel Family at Nyman’s House, West Sussex until 1947 when that was burnt down and then at Holmstead Manor in the same locality.Purchased from Oliver Messel early 1960s by Frederick and Phyllis Baden-Watkins for Flaxley Abbey.Literature: The Artist and the Country House by John Harris; illustrated p.212. The house, which was probably built in the 1670s or 80s, is distinctive in having four towers set at the angles of the central square block, a design which appears in some plans which were engraved by Sebastiano Serlio. The garden shows signs of being in the transitional period when the English style, implemented by such as Capability Brown and William Kent, came to the fore with the house being set in an Arcadian idyll with a naturalistic ideal landscape. This progression supplanted the more formal garden style with avenues, water features and canals so favoured as a consequence of the Dutch designers who had held sway after the Glorious Revolution. A positive identification of the house has proved elusive although it has been suggested that it bears some resemblance to Thirlestane Castle which was the seat of the Duke of Lauderdale and situated in Scottish Borders country. This is difficult to determine though as the house was extensively enlarged in the 1840s and there is no record of its appearance or even of the garden.John Harris, writing in The Artist and the Country House from the 15th Century to the Present Day, says that: “As an art form, the subject of the Artist and the Country House, painting portraits of country houses, their gardens, or park or estate painting as it may be called, did not originate in England. But by about 1720 it had established itself there so strongly that it had become a phenomenon as nationally English as perpendicular Gothic or Tudor Renaissance. It was late in coming, but when it did, the amount of painting exceeded anything else on the continent”.There are very few drawings by Tudor surveyors depicting country houses that have survived although there are some examples of artists from Europe being attracted to England to represent the nascent English Renaissance. Anton van den Wyngaerde in 1558/9 and Joris Hoefnagel in 1568 (who gave us the representation of Nonsuch Palace) are two examples. The earliest topographical representations of country houses in England, rather than a more architectural representation, were produced by Flemish painters, in about 1620.There had been secular architectural studies in Italy but it did not really blossom until the 18th century in Venice. In France, there was the 1416 Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry by Pol de Limbourg which displayed astonishingly realistic views of castles with sporting activities and farming in the landscapes surrounding these buildings and seen from an artificially elevated viewpoint. This tradition persis...

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