JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

Old Palace Yard and Westminster House 1780; Northumberland House, Charing Cross

JOSEPH PAUL

Sold



REF: 302234

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Description

London, England

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JOSEPH PAUL English Schoolc.1804-1887 Old Palace Yard and Westminster House 1780; Northumberland House, Charing Cross Oil on canvas, a pair 71 x 91.5 cms 28 x 36 inches

The life of Joseph Paul, as well as his artistic career, earned him a reputation that one can say he was a 'bit of a character.' He was a gifted artist who was associated with the "Greats" of the Norwich School but turned from producing his own works to painting pastiches of Constable, John Sell Cotman, John Crome and James Stark which were then passed off as the by the original artists. It is alleged that he fell foul of the authorities and fled his native Norfolk for the obscurity of London in about 1830. A Mr Hinds of Yarmouth, who knew Paul, attested to his being a heavy drinker but also having a reputation as a singer. In addition to all this, he married five times in his lifetime and managed to live until the age of eighty-three.

Joseph Paul's father was Robert, a portrait painter who exhibited many works at the Norwich Society. It is not known who gave Joseph his artistic instruction apart from his father. The latter would have known the principle Norwich School artists so the son would have had close contact with their works giving him an opportunity to study them and the techniques employed. Harold Day, in his "The Norwich School of Painters" surmises that he had the closest association with George Vincent and Paul's depiction of skies clearly derives from Vincent although the overall palette and brushwork is more redolent of John Crome.

Paul had his own quite distinctive style which is apparent even in his imitations of other artists. He had a free brush technique and there is an exuberance about his work. He utilised red grounds which gave a warmth to foliage and trees and faint pink can be discerned in the skies and this results in a highly attractive effect. The figures clearly show the influence of Crome and they fit well into the overall picture, not drawing one's eye from the composition as a whole.

The rare earliest works are of his native Norwich and these are followed by the paintings done in the popular Norwich School style, containing the standard features associated with the group of low horizons with distant fields, dykes wending their way to the horizon, churches, windmills and trees adding perspective and figures, often battling squally rain, on lanes with cart ruts.

In the "Walpole Society" vol.IX published in 1920/21, Mrs MH Finberg in her article 'Canaletto in England" writes: "…being supposed to have been concerned in some crime, consequent on which he fled to London." For whatever reason that he had to leave East Anglia, he went to London around 1830 and set about working on paintings with different influences to appeal to the new market. He made good versions of Canalettos, Samuel Scotts, Rembrandts and other old masters. The London views of Scott and Canaletto are probably best known today with some highly attractive views on the Thames and around St James's and not all were taken directly from original earlier paintings. Day speculates that he might have been working in this different...

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