JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

Reinforcements for the Crimea; troops being ferried out to their transports prior to sailing

JOHN WILLIAM CARMICHAEL

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Description

JOHN WILSON CARMICHAELEnglish School1800-1868Reinforcements for the Crimea; troops being ferried out to their transports prior to sailingOil on board 26 x 35 cms10¼ x 133/4 inchesOverall framed size 32.3 x 40.8 cms 123/4 x 161/8 ins John (also known erroneously as James) Wilson Carmichael was a highly regarded 19th century marine and landscape artist who spent the first forty-five years of his life in Newcastle.He was born on 9th January in the Ouseburn area of Newcastle upon Tyne and was the eldest of three children. His father William was a ship’s carpenter and his mother Mary was the daughter of a seaman. In his teens, John went to sea for three years, working on a ship which plied its trade between ports in Portugal and Spain. On his return to the North-East, he followed in his father’s footsteps and started an apprenticeship as a shipwright at the ship building firm Richard Farrington and Brothers. The Farringtons however were not involved solely in the construction ships as they also were also engaged in wood carving and gilding, cabinet making and upholsterering which brought them into contact with the cultural life of Newcastle. Joseph Farrington, in particular, recognised a talent in the young Carmichael and bought him a box of watercolours.The Carmichael family lived near the Quayside so there was constant activity to be observed with ships coming and going. John devoted his spare time to studying the subject matter that interested him and drawing it. He met and befriended Thomas Miles Richardson Snr. (1784-1848), at that time the best-known marine artist in Newcastle and almost certainly took some instruction from him. He also became friends with the local developer and architect John Dobson in the early 1820s and the latter was involved with the extensive redevelopment of Newcastle. Carmichael produced watercolours from the linear, perspective-driven architectural drawings, giving them a lifelike context animated with figures. The drawings of two buildings in particular, which were given the Carmichael “natural” treatment, were the Grainger Market and the central station.In the early 1820s, the aspirant artist forsook his life as a ship’s carpenter to concentrate all his time and efforts on painting and working as a painter of miniatures and a teacher of drawing and draughtsmanship. In 1825 he exhibited two paintings at the Northumberland Institution and he gradually made a name for himself in the Newcastle area. In 1828, he set up a studio in Blackett St., which adjoined that of T M Richardson and the Northern Academy which he, together with Henry Perlee Parker, the coastal and genre painter, and T M Richardson, helped to inaugurate. The Academy provided opportunities for him to display his work and his marines and landscapes, depicting pleasing local scenes, attracted influential Newcastle buyers.He first gained significant public attention with an historical painting depicting the Fight between Shannon and Chesapeake for which he received 13 guineas. Trinity House in Newcastle then commissioned him to paint The Bombardment of Algiers and they paid him 40 guineas. It rem...

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