JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

A view of the Thames looking east with Westminster Bridge in the distance, Randalls' Mill in Nine Elms in the right foreground, Lambeth Palace and St Paul's beyond with Westminster Abbey on the left

PIETER TILLEMANS

Sold

London, England

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REF: 374784

Height: 61 cm (24")

Width: 111.9 cm (44.1")

Description

PIETER TILLEMANS
1684-1734
Anglo-Flemish School

Oil on canvas

Pieter Tillemans was born in Antwerp in 1684 but came to England in 1708, becoming a significant artist in his adopted country, particularly in horse painting where he was among the forefront of equestrian painters who revolutionised the depiction of that subject.

He was the son of a diamond cutter and the brother-in-law of the renowned flower and bird painter, Pieter Casteels. The two young artists were encouraged to come to London by a picture dealer called Turner and they worked for him as copyists. Apparently, Tillemans was particularly adept at recreating the work of David Teniers as well as the French battle scene painter, Jacques Courtois. His proficiency rapidly gained him a prominent reputation in art circles and his depiction of horses was particularly noted. So quickly had he attained a high standing that in 1711, he was part of the group of leading artists who met in Great Queen Street, London, to set up the country's first Academy of Art.

The principal source of his independent work early in his career was for drawings commissioned by John Bridges in 1719 to depict topographical scenes of Oxford, but mainly views in Northamptonshire, to be used as illustrations for his History of Northamptonshire. Bridges hired him to produce five hundred Indian ink drawings and paid him a guinea a day plus board and lodging. This work was not published until after the death of both the artist and the writer but for Tillemans, it was an introduction to the increasingly popular depictions of grand country houses and their environs. He joined the group of other Netherlandish painters such as Thomas Wyck, Jan Siberechts, Leonard Knyff and Pieter Andreas Rysbrack who had found favour in England and were highly adept at these works, often on a very large scale with some shown from an elevated perspective. Tillemans' paintings of this type, usually with figures, often actual portraits, in the foreground, evoked the feeling and sensibility of the English landscape. Examples of this type include: "A View of the Garden and main Parterre of Winchendon House, Buckinghamshire", "Chirk Castle from the South", "Newstead Abbey, Nottinghamshire" and "A View of Uppark".

Tillemans had become a favourite with the nobility and country squires of England as highly proficient at depicting their seats but it was his all-round ability as an artist, able to paint landscapes, portraits, conversation or 'fancy' subjects, stage scenery (with Joseph Goupy for the opera) and horses that saw him develop into one of the founders of the sporting conversation piece together with James Seymour and John Wootton. These three influential artists were all members of the Virtuosi Club of St Luke and Tillemans became a steward of this body in 1725. He and Wootton were friends and they occasionally worked together but although the former had closely studied racing prints after Francis Barlow, Tillemans moved further from the darker tones of that painter and consequently his paintings tend to be rather airier, almost rococo, than Wootton's.

Royalty and the nobility met at Newmarket for the season and eminent artists were ther...

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