JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

The Long Walk, Windsor Great Park

WILLIAM HAVELL

Sold

London, England

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REF: 125886

Description

WILLIAM HAVELL 1782-1857 English SchoolThe Long Walk, Windsor Great Park Oil on canvas 61 x 91 cms24 x 35 ¾ inchesOverall framed size 70.5 x 102 cms 27 ¾ x 40 ins Provenance: Private collection purchased from Agnew’s 1969
William Havell was one of the members of the Havell dynasty of whom six became painters. He was born in Reading on 9th February 1782, one of fourteen children. His father was a drawing master at Reading Grammar School who initially opposed his son's artistic aspirations, instead wanting him to obtain employment that would provide immediate financial remuneration to help alleviate the financial burden of such a large family.

However, William did not take to the commercial world and persevered with his painting and drawing to the extent that his father, astonished by his son's technical ability, relented and allowed him to follow his calling. Between 1802 and 1803, he travelled in Wales and the Lake District with fellow artists Joshua Cristall and Cornelius Varley.

He moved to 6, Clipstone St, Fitzroy Square, London in 1804, painting almost exclusively in watercolours, and exhibited his first picture in the Royal Academy, a view of Caernarvon Castle, in that year. He returned to the Lake District for nearly a year in 1807.

In 1805, he had become a founder member of the Society of Painters in Watercolours and when this body changed its name in 1812 to Society of Painters in Oils and Watercolours, he began to work in oils as well. He had a reputation as a somewhat abrasive character and for some reason, in 1814, he resigned from the Society. He fell out with the British Institute in 1815 when they rejected for exhibition his "Walnut Pickers at Petersham" and these two incidents, combined with some other disagreements, may have been the impetus for his acceptance of the post of official artist to the British embassy in Peking under Lord Amherst in 1816.

This position was not a success however and following his resignation, Havell travelled to India and worked as a portrait painter to the British establishment there and in Burma from 1817 to 1825. He briefly returned to England in 1826 and having recovered from a bout of cholera, set off again, this time to Italy with a fellow artist, Thomas Uwins, remaining there from 1828 to 1829. He made many drawings and sketches on this journey and produced both oils and watercolours of them on his return, some topographically accurate, others more capriccio.

These Italianate scenes were not a great commercial success and his last years, leading up to his death on 16th December 1857 were spent almost in poverty, alleviated a little by a pension provided by the Royal Academy Turner Fund.

Although his art traversed most of Italy and some of the east, as well as Wales, Scotland and England from the Lake District to Devon, it is his home region of the Thames which inspired him most and for which he is best remembered. Windsor, Richmond, Henley, Marlow and Caversham were often portrayed. In about 1818, the Havell brothers published a volume "Pictu...

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