JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

Portrait in grey and black

ALBERT ROSENTHAL

Sold



REF: 356029

1

Description

London, England

+44 (0) 20 8748 1747

ALBERT ROSENTHAL American School1863-1939 Portrait in grey and black Oil on canvas, signed and dated 1925, in a Louis XIII style carved gilt wood frame. 76 x 63.5 cms30 x 25 inchesOverall framed size 94.2 x 81.6 cms 371/8 x 321/8 ins

"My school days ended in my 16th year, and then commenced an interesting apprenticeship in my father's (Max Rosenthal) lithographic studio. The thrill was the nights spent in the newly opened classes of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts with that talented, kindly, but then paralyzed Christian Shueselle as the teacher." This comes from the opening paragraph of Albert Rosenthal: Painter, Lithographer, Etcher written by the artist and printed in 1929, a signed copy of which he dated 7/18/29 and presented to the British Museum.

He had been born in Philadelphia on 30th January 1863 and the family home on Spruce Street also housed the studio of his Polish-born father who had established a successful career as a painter, draftsman, etcher and lithographer. Albert wrote of their home that it "… was the rendezvous of a group of gentlemen, the pioneers in the collecting of Autograph letters of Eminent Americans, who employed my father in the making of lithographic portraits, to go with the autograph material. One of the group was Charles R Hildeburn, a graduate druggist, whose interest in his profession ceased entirely upon getting his degree…It was his persistence, and insistence, that compelled my interest to etch portraits of the important men of Colonial and Revolutionary times in America. It was a daily association for some nineteen years."

It was as a consequence of Hildeburn's friendship and encouragement that the young Rosenthal embarked on this considerable undertaking and he started with the depiction of the members of the Federal Convention of 1787. He made the etchings from the original paintings and he was assisted in locating these in the collections of families and institutions by Dr Thomas Addis Emmet of New York. When the series was completed it was incorporated into a memorial volume of the History of the Constitutional Convention in 1887.

As the artist himself noted "The conception of the History of the Supreme Court of the United States was the logical sequel to this work" and this was followed in 1890 by the complete group of the portraits of Chiefs and the Associated Justices of the United States. Then followed the series of portraits of the Attorneys General of the United States and in the making of the etching plates on this project he was assisted by his father.

With the conclusion of these large undertakings, Albert Rosenthal felt a development in his artistic life was necessary and he wrote: "A desire was always in my mind to paint portraits and in 1890, I entered the Atelier Gérôme in l'École des Beaux-Arts, Paris with the idea that the etching period was done with." Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) was an important French painter and sculptor who was particularly influenced by the neo-Classical style and portrayed Ori...