

JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

A Portrait of a Huntsman seated on a Dark Bay, a view of a Hunt beyond

JOSEPH DUNN

Sold



Description

JOSEPH DUNN 1806-1860 English School A Portrait of a Huntsman seated on a Dark Bay, a view of a Hunt beyond Oil on canvas, signed and dated 1841 58 x 76 cms 22 7/8 x 30 inches Overall framed size 74 x 92 cms 29 1/8 x 36 1/4 ins

In her Dictionary of British Equestrian Artists, Sally Mitchell writes of Joseph Dunn: "One feels that had he worked more seriously as a painter, he would have been an artist of considerable note. His work is very rare."

Depending on how one regards these things, he could either be described as a bit of a character or as a ne'er-do-well. He was the son of William Dunn, a Birmingham based owner of a coaching service to London and Joseph seems to have had no formal training as an artist which, judging from the high quality and technical ability of his work, indicates that he must have had an estimable natural talent.

It is said of him that he never worked apart from painting the occasional commission and this was his only source of erratic income. He spent all of his inheritance and on the death of his mother, sold for cash all the silver of hers that he could find. The focus of all his spending was the pursuit of his great love: hunting.

He spent a considerable amount of his life indulging in this sport and often rode the horses of the patrons who had commissioned equestrian portraits. He abandoned his wife and children for lengthy periods while he was away until he was killed, aged fifty-four, in a hunting accident. He had lived with them at various addresses in Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire and his death left them penniless.

He is best known from his comparatively limited output for horse paintings but examples of dogs - usually hounds or gun dogs of some type - and prize cattle - "White Ox in a Landscape" painted in 1846 for example - are also known. His technique displays a deep and sensitive understanding of horses and he also captures the character of the animal which has a lively eye which only fine artists can translate to canvas.

Bibliography:

The Dictionary of British Equestrian Artists - Sally Mitchell

Dictionary of British Animal Painters - J C Wood