JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

"'Thrysis' a Favourite Hunter, the Property of Sir George Sitwell, Bart."

JOHN FREDERICK HERRING Snr

Sold



REF: 109642

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Description

London, England

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JOHN FREDERICK HERRING SNR. 1795-1865 English School"'Thrysis' a Favourite Hunter, the Property of Sir George Sitwell, Bart." Oil on canvas 56.5 x 76.5 cms221/4 x 301/8 inchesExhibited: Royal Academy 1826 no.281 John Frederick Herring Snr is regarded as one of the finest and most renowned sporting artists of the nineteenth century and as Grant says, "many of his works have become classics of their kind…"

He was born in Newgate Street, Blackfriars, London, one of nine children, and resided there until he was eighteen years old. His father, Benjamin, was a fringe maker and upholsterer originally of Dutch descent but had been born in British controlled America and subsequently came to England. John Frederick was always interested in drawing and sketching but was probably self-taught, although possibly the driver of the London-Woking coach, a family friend, aided him with drawing early on. His father though had always wanted him to continue the family business but his son apparently detested the work.

By September 1814, he had moved to Doncaster but the reason for this is unclear and various theories have been put forward. One was that there was an old branch of the family living there, another that he had eloped with Ann Harris (they were married by 1815), or it was purely the romantic thrill of travel. All his life he had seen and become fascinated with the Doncaster coach which passed his house daily and this may have thrilled his sense of adventure. Indeed, it is believed that he had learnt the skill of driving a coach team while still in his teens.

He had been in Doncaster only a short while when, passing a coach depot, he espied a coach painter unable to execute the depiction of a horse on a crest that he was doing for the side of a coach. The young Herring asked if he could help the painter and so impressed were the managers of the depot that they employed him to do the crests on a new coach, the Royal Forrester. He then heard that the driver of the Wakefield to Lincoln coach was retiring and so applied for the job, passing the test and earning the position as the driver of the Nelson which he did for the next two years. He was then transferred to the Doncaster-Halifax coach, which brought him into contact with Charles Spencer-Stanhope who was so taken by Herring's painting ability that he gave him his first commission. As early as 1815, the Doncaster Gazette engaged him to draw annually the winner of the St Leger and these were then turned into engravings which were published by Messrs Sheardown and Co, later taken over by S & J Fuller of London in 1826. This drawn recording of the St Leger winner was produced by Herring for thirty-three years in a row and later for the Epsom Derby, twenty-one times, also published by Fuller. Other engravings by him were published in "The Annals of Sporting" and this publication was fulsome in its praise of Herring.

His reputation spread rapidly through word of mouth and the publication of these prints and several people exhorted him to give up the coach driving career and take up painting full time. Herring, whether because he was keen to hold onto steady employment a...

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