

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Thomas GAINSBOROUGH (Sudbury 1727 - London 1788)

Wooded Landscape with a Country Cart and Faggot Gatherers

Pen and brown ink, with grey, green and pink washes, heightened with touches of white, on prepared paper, varnished.

221 x 310 mm. (8 3/4 x 12 1/8 in.)

This splendid drawing is datable to the late 1760's and is a typical example of Gainsborough's use of experimental techniques, with its combination of pen, ink and various coloured washes, heightened with white chalk, and the varnishing of the sheet to strengthen the image. It is most closely related to a drawing of a landscape with a boy seated on the back of a cart, in the collection of the British Museum.

As John Hayes and Lindsay Stainton have noted of the present sheet, 'This unusually spacious composition, which can probably be dated towards the end of the 1760s, includes several of Gainsborough's most familiar motifs: the boy sitting in the back of the cart is in the same pose as a drawing in the British Museum, while the women and children gathering sticks in the foreground anticipate the "fancy" subjects of the 1780s in which similar rustic figures were painted on the scale of life.'

Provenance:

Possibly John Warde, Squerryes Court, Westerham, Kent
Major J. R. O'Brien Warde, Squerryes Court, Westerham, Kent
Thence by descent until 2010.

Exhibitions

Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, and elsewhere, Gainsborough Drawings, 1983, no.49.

Literature:

M. T. Ritchie, *English Drawings: An Anthology*, London, 1935, pl.25; Mary Woodall, *Gainsborough's Landscape Drawings*, London, 1939, p.131, no.344; John Hayes, *The Drawings of Thomas Gainsborough*, New Haven and London, 1970, Vol.I, p.182, no.317; Timothy Clifford, Anthony Griffiths and Martin Royalton-Kisch, *Gainsborough and Reynolds in the British Museum*, exhibition catalogue, London, 1978, p.15, under no.35; John Hayes and Lindsay Stainton, *Gainsborough Drawings*, exhibition catalogue, Washington and elsewhere, 1983, pp.118-119, no.49.

Artist description:

The musician William Jackson, a close friend of the artist and an early biographer, wrote that 'If I were to rest his reputation upon one point; it should be on his Drawings...No man ever possessed methods so various in producing effect, and all excellent.' A prolific draughtsman, Gainsborough apparently never sold any of his drawings, although he is thought to have given away many of them as presents. As Susan Sloman has noted, 'During his lifetime Gainsborough's drawings were known to an inner circle of friends, artist and connoisseurs, but not to the wider public.'