Figures on a path, Greenwich Park

James Holland

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Description

James Holland O.W.S. (1799-1870)
Figures on a path, Greenwich Park

Signed with initials and inscribed lower left: JH/Greenwich/Park
Watercolour heightened with touches of bodycolour
29.8 by 19.6 cm, 11 ¾ by 7 ¾ in.

Holland moved to Deptford in 1830 and remained there until 1845. He frequently studied the architecture of the Naval Hospital in numerous sketches and finished paintings (see no.34), but also as evidenced by the present watercolour, the surrounding landscapes of Greenwich and Blackheath. Stylistically this dates from the 1840s whereas no.34 is typical of Holland's work of the early 1830s.

The present watercolour depicts figures on one of the paths that traverse the steel slope that rises up behind Greenwich Hospital on which sits the Greenwich Observatory. The Park at Greenwich was first enclosed in 1433 by Henry V's brother, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester. During the 1660s, Charles II commissioned the celebrated French landscape designer, André Le Notre, to redesign the park. His resulting plan was to create a formal layout of tree lined avenues traversing the site, framed by banked landscaping, parterre and terraces.

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