

Two Portrait Studies of John Ruskin

George Richmond



Description

George Richmond, R.A. (1809-1896)
Two Portrait Studies of John Ruskin

Red and black chalk on grey-blue laid watermarked paper
31.2 by 18 cm., 12 ¼ by 7 in.

Provenance:

Henry Yates Thompson (1838-1928);
Anonymous Sale, Christie's, 19th March 1985, lot 40, one of two;
By descent to the present owner

Literature:

James S. Dearden, John Ruskin - A Life in Pictures, 1999, pp. 49-51, no.41, ill.

Exhibited:

Sheffield, Ruskin Gallery, The Portraits of John Ruskin, 9th September to 29th October 2000;
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, The Portraits of John Ruskin, 21st November 2000 to 24th January 2001

Richmond and Ruskin became close friends after first meeting in Rome in 1840. Richmond drew Ruskin's portrait in 1843 and his father's in 1847 as a wedding present for John. The present drawings are preliminary studies for a portrait commissioned by Ruskin's father John James Ruskin in 1857. They were drawn between 24th February and mid March when Ruskin had seven sittings for the portrait. According to his diary, John James Ruskin went to see the portrait on 18th March and it was finished ten days later. He was pleased with the portrait of his son and in 1858 he had it engraved by Francis Holl. The finished portrait hung in Joan Severn's bedroom at Ruskin's house, Brantwood, until it was sold in the Brantwood dispersal sale on 29th May 1931. It was bought by Charles Goodspeed but later destroyed in a fire.

Richmond produced another portrait of Ruskin in black and white chalk at around this time which remained in the artist's possession during his lifetime and was bought by the National Portrait Gallery from his executors in 1896.