

Adoration of the Shepherds

Isaac Oliver

Sold



Description

Isaac Oliver (circa 1565-1617)
Adoration of the Shepherds

Signed with monogram lower right: IO inven.t and inscribed with a P upper left
Pen and brown ink and grey washes heightened with white on laid paper
12.1 by 15.4 cm., 4 ³/₄ by 6 in.

Provenance:

Richard Ramsey Bond (1826-1891) of 51 Seymour Street, London;
Mrs A.S. Mann;
With Manning Gallery, London, where bought 27th April 1972;
By descent to the present owner

Isaac Oliver was born in Rouen the son of a Huguenot goldsmith Pierre Olivier in circa 1565. His father had fled from Rouen to Geneva in 1557 to escape persecution and having returned for a few years travelled to London with the young Isaac in 1568. When Isaac reached the appropriate age he entered the studio of the miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619) who Pierre Olivier probably met in Geneva.

Isaac Oliver's earliest known miniature is dated 1587 and he quickly made a name for himself with Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex (1565-1601) an early patron. In 1596 Oliver appears to have visited Italy as an inscription on a portrait in the Victoria and Albert Museum (P.4-1917) states it was made in Venice. The influence of Italian art is evident in Oliver's ink and wash drawings such as the present work. Related drawings, 'Antiope' and 'The Entombment' are in the British Museum and there are six ink drawings by Oliver in the Yale Center for British Art.

On his return from Italy, Oliver was appointed personal limner to the Queen, Anne of Denmark in June 1605 while Hilliard continued to find favour with King James I. He also found another royal patron in the heir to the throne fourteen year old Henry, Prince of Wales who died aged eighteen.

On his death, Oliver's work was left to his son Peter Oliver (1589-1647) who was also an artist. Peter was the son of his first wife Elizabeth. After her death he married Sara Gheeraerts the half-sister of the artist Marcus Gheeraerts (1561/2-1636) who died in 1605 and thirdly Elizabeth Harding the daughter of a court flautist.