Study of Figures by a Fire

George Romney



REF: 2896

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Description

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George Romney (1734-1802)
Study of Figures by a Fire

Pencil
14 by 9.5 cm., 5 ½ by 3 ¾ in.

Provenance:
Mrs Alister Mathews;
Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, London, 13th March 1986, lot 64 (part);
Private Collection, London

The present drawing once formed part of a sketchbook from 1793, which was apparently inscribed 'Opening of the Ark'. It is not certain when the sketchbook was dismantled, certainly before it was sold at Sotheby's where it formed part of a folio of loose drawings which included studies for a range of subjects including Opening of the Ark, Canidia and the Youth, L'allegro, and Titania's Chariot as well as figure studies, including of Lady Hamilton.

It has not as yet been possible to identify the subject of this drawing, the large urn or vase behind the crouching figure suggests that it may have been intended to have an Orientalist flavour, perhaps inspired by Milton, whose work was inspiring Romney's work at this time. The statuesque female figure, may be intended to be a priestess or sorceress, standing next to a fire. The crouching figure bears a similarity to the later Lapland witch subjects that Romney was exploring later in the decade.

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