Studies for Arthur from Shakespeare's King John

George Henry Harlow

Sold



REF: 786

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Description

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George Henry Harlow (1787-1819)
Studies for Arthur from Shakespeare's King John

Black and red chalk and stump on wove paper stamped .ARLEY STREET upper left
24.3 by 19.9cm., 9 ½ by 7 ¾ in.

These two studies are preparatory drawings for the figure of Edmund in Harlow's oil painting `King John, Act IV, Scene 1 - Hubert and Arthur' which was exhibited at the British Institution in 1815. Hubert is the servant of King John who has been ordered to kill the King's nephew Arthur, who is his rival to the throne. In this scene, Hubert is told to `put out his eyes' but Arthur begs for his life and Hubert relents. During his escape however, Arthur falls and dies.

Harlow was the best known and most talented of Sir Thomas Lawrence's pupils but a falling out with Lawrence and an early death means he is little known today. Harlow entered Lawrence's studio in 1802 and Joseph Farington noted in his diary that `Lawrence has got a young pupil of 15 years of age, who draws, Lane says, better than he does. His name is Harlow.' Harlow's ambition and impetuosity meant however that he lasted less than eighteen months with Lawrence and they parted on bad terms. Harlow found some success as a painter of portraits and theatrical subjects however and first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1805 aged eighteen. His portrait drawings are of great quality with a distinctive use of red chalk on the lips and cheek showing the influence of Lawrence. He went on his own Grand Tour in June 1818 and died of a throat infection shortly after his return aged 32.

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