Portrait of Honora Edgeworth, nee Sneyd

Anna Tonelli

Sold



REF: 2986

1
Description

Guy Peppiatt Fine Art Ltd.
Riverwide House, 6 Mason's Yard, Duke St. St. James's, London, SW1Y 6BU
T: 020 7930 3839 M: 07956 968 284 E: guy@peppiattfineart.co.uk www.peppiattfineart.co.uk

Anna Tonelli (c.1763-1846)
Portrait of Honora Edgeworth, nee Sneyd (1751-1780)

Half'-length, looking left
Inscribed on part of old backing: Honora Sneyd/married to R.L. Edgeworth/this portrait belongs to/C.S. Edgeworth/Langham House Ham Com..
Pastel over pencil
Oval 23.3 by 18.2 cm., 9 by 7 in.

Provenance:
By descent to Charles Edgeworth (1786-1864), Langham House, Ham;
Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, 9th November 1978, lot 144 as by Hugh Douglas Hamilton

This fine pastel has recently been re-attributed to Anna Tonelli, an Italian artist who specialised in miniatures and pastel portraits, whose work has often been mistaken for her likely teacher Hugh Douglas Hamilton (1740-1808). Her early training seems to have been under the tutelage of Guiseppe Piattoli (1748-1834) in Florence before, later becoming a pupil of Hamilton (see nos. 47, 48 and 59). By 1794, Tonelli had moved to London where she was employed to teach drawing to the children of Lord and Lady Clive, who she had met in Italy. Between 1798 and 1801 she accompanied the Clives to India, where she worked in watercolour or miniature, rather than pastel. She returned to Italy at the end of 1801, where she remained for the rest of her life.

The present portrait may be a copy after a portrait by Hugh Douglas Hamilton. It is characteristic of the precise style that Tonelli adopted when copying the work of her former tutor. There are two further portraits of two of the sitter's sisters, Charlotte and Mary, in the National Gallery of Art Washington. There are also recorded portraits of the sitter's uncle, Lewis Bagot (1740-1802), Bishop of Bristol, and his wife, who sat for Tonelli in 1797. A painting of her husband Richard Lovell Edgeworth by Hamilton is in the National Gallery of Ireland (NGI 1350).

The writer Honora Sneyd (1751-1780) was born in Bath, but following the death of her mother, she moved to Lichfield, aged 5, to be brought up by family friends, Canon Thomas Seward (1708-1790). His progressive beliefs on female education encouraged both Sneyd, and his own daughter, the poet Anna Seward (1742-1809), in their literary careers. In 1773, she married the writer, politician and inventor, Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817) and the couple moved initially to Ireland, to oversee the family's estate Edgeworthstown, County Longford before returning to England in 1776. In 1779, Honora was diagnosed with Tuberculosis and they remained in England until her death the following May. Richard Edgeworth returned to Ireland in 1782 and the following decade, sat for Hamilton for a portrait in oils in 1795 (National Gallery of Ireland 1350).

We are grateful to Neil Jeffares for the attribution of this work to Tonelli.

Guy Peppiatt Fine Art Ltd.
Riverwide House, 6 Mason's Yard, Duke St. St. James's, London, SW1Y 6BU
T: 020 7930 3839 M: 07956 968 284 E: guy@peppiattfineart.co.uk www.peppiattfineart.co.uk