

The Holbein Gate, Whitehall

Bernard Lens III



Description

Attributed to Bernard Lens III (1682-1740)
The Holbein Gate, Whitehall

Pen and black ink and grey washes
27 by 22 cm., 10 ½ by 8 ½ in.

Provenance:
Stanhope Shelton;
Private collection, London

Holbein Gate was a monumental gateway that crossed Whitehall, built between 1531 and 1532 to link parts of Whitehall Palace that were otherwise separated by the road. Also known as the Kings Gate or the Cockpit Gate, it appears that the painter Hans Holbein had his lodgings in the gate. The gate and the Banqueting House were the only parts of the palace to survive the catastrophic fire of 1698. However, it was demolished in 1759 to allow for better access for traffic, as the central arch was only 12 feet wide with a second small pedestrian access in the base of the east tower. It was supposed to be rebuilt in Windsor Great Park, but its materials were dispersed.

Lens followed his father and grandfather in becoming an artist. He established a reputation as a miniaturist and watercolourist, as well as drawing master of note, numbering the Duke of Cumberland, Princesses Mary and Louisa and Horace Walpole amongst his clients. He was appointed Limner to both George I and II.