A Good Vintage

Thomas Rowlandson

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Description

Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827)
A Good Vintage

Signed lower right: T. Rowlandson
Pen and ink and watercolour over pencil
25.8 by 21.5 cm., 10 by 8 ½ in.

Provenance:
With Lowell Libson Ltd, London, 2016;
Private collection, London

Literature:
Huon Mallalieu, Many faces of a great Regency caricaturist, The Times, 18th June 2016, ill.

During the 18th Century there was a growing interest in the 'science' of physiognomy and how the study of the face could tell the innermost character of that person. Rowlandson found in this a rich seam of humour. However, his interest appears to have been far more than merely mining the subject for amusing visual puns. There are several carefully observed drawings which, whilst gently humorous, are more serious explorations of the subject. In the present watercolour, the pleasure of the artist takes in depicting and exaggerating the features of the figures for emotional and visual effect is evident. The careful positioning of the heads gives free reign to the artist's expressive use of pen line. As Adrian Bury noted, 'Here is a draughtsman who wrote all things with a running pen in the most sensitive calligraphy' (see Adrian Bury, Rowlandson Drawings, 1949).

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