Durham from the South-west

George Fennel Robson

Sold

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Description

George Fennel Robson (1788-1833)
Durham from the South-west

Inscribed verso: Durham/Robson
Watercolour over pencil heightened with stopping out
20.1 by 27.9 cm., 7 ¾ by 11 in.

Robson was born in Durham but was in London by 1804 and first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1807. He travelled extensively in the north of England and Scotland and exhibited frequently at the Old Watercolour Society. His first trip to Scotland was financed by the sale of a print of a View of Durham and he produced several views of his home city. This view is taken from the south-west across the valley of the river Wear showing the cathedral to the right and Durham Castle to the left.

In 1819, age just 32, Robson was elected President of the Society of Painters in Oil and Watercolours, having gained a considerable reputation as a watercolourist of note and for his ability to rival oil painting with his bravura technique in capturing dramatic and atmospheric effects with a delicacy and subtlety. Robson became instrumental in developing the large-scale exhibition watercolour in response to growing public interesting in the medium. The critics of the time devoted much time to acclaiming Robson's prowess with one writing in 1827, 'Mr Robson has justly estimated his powers, for the breadth and massiveness of his style are peculiarly adapted to the representation of the more grand and imposing effect of nature.' Robson died early, at the age of just 45 and the Minute Book of the Society of Painters in Water Colours recorded the members' grief at the loss of their 'revered excellent friend and fellow labourer'.

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