Le Pont Louis XVI, Paris

David Cox



REF: 2419

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Description

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David Cox (1783-1859)
Le Pont Louis XVI, Paris

Watercolour over traces of pencil
8.3 by 13.2 cm., 3 ¼ by 5 ¼ in.

Provenance:
E.J. Nathan;
L.G. Duke (1890-1971) (D335);
With Spink and Sons, London

The Pont Louis XVI, or the Pont de la Concorde, as it has been known since 1830, was designed by Jean-Rodolphe Perronet in 1787. A bridge had been intended since the construction of the Place de la Concorde (originally Place Louis XVI) in 1725, to replace a ferry crossing that had been in use. Perronet used stone and masonry from the demolished Bastille, to ensure that construction continued during the French Revolution and the bridge was completed in 1791.

In 1810 Napoleon added a series of eight statues of generals killed during the campaigns of the First Empire. At the Restoration, these were replaced with twelve monumental, white marble statues of four soldiers, four sailors and four ministers, including Richelieu, Colbert, Sugar and Sully. However, it was discovered that these were too heavy for the bridge and they were removed to Versailles by Louis-Philippe I, in 1830.

Cox visited Paris for the first time in 1829 and returned for a second visit in 1832, so the present study must date from his first trip. On the day after arriving in Paris, Cox sprained his ankle, whilst visiting the Palais Royal and for the rest of his six-week stay, he was confined to sketching from a hired carriage. The rapidity of execution of the pencil line, the loosely applied washes and the restricted palette indicate that this work was created on the spot.

A finished drawing of the bridge is recorded in A.P. Oppé, The Watercolours of Turner, Cox and De Wint, pl. XVII.

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