Portrait of a Gentleman

John Raphael Smith

Sold

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Description

John Raphael Smith (1752-1812)
Portrait of a Gentleman

Half-length wearing a brown coat and yellow waistcoat
Coloured chalks on laid paper
Oval 22.8 by 19 cm., 9 by 7 ½ in.

The present work is typical of the small-scale lively portraits that Smith produced either in chalk, as here, or in pastel. The rapidity and spontaneity of handling introduces an informality and feeling of intimacy to his portraits.

Smith had initially established himself as probably the leading printmakers of the late eighteenth century in Britain. At the height of his studio, he employed some thirty engravers and had reproduced the work of most of the leading painters of the period, including pastels by Jean-Etienne Liotard, Hugh Douglas Hamilton, Daniel Gardner and John Russell.

In 1802, he retired from printmaking and sold off his entire stock, leaving the way clear for Rudolf Ackermann (1764-1843) to take over his position. Smith from this date onwards worked in oil, chalk and pastel, travelling widely throughout Britain to undertake portrait commissions.

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