Interior of St Eustache, Paris

John Scarlett Davis

Sold

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Description

John Scarlett Davis (1804-1845)
The interior of Saint Eustache, Paris, during a service

Signed with initials and dated lower right J S D 1836
Watercolour over pencil
25.7 by 18.4 cm, 10 ¼ by 7 ¼ in.

John Scarlett Davis was born in Herefordshire and gained early recognition for his art, winning a Silver palette from the Royal Society of Arts, at the age of just 11. He entered the Royal Academy Schools at 16 and subsequently established a reputation as a portrait painter in oils, as well as, a gifted watercolourist specialising in interior views, especially of churches and art galleries. Davis travelled extensively in Britain and more widely through Europe in search of suitable subjects and at the behest of his patrons.

The present watercolour depicts the nave of St Eustache Church from the West, with the high altar in the distance. The church, which served as the Royal Parish Church until 1789, was built between 1532 and about 1640, on the site of an earlier medieval church. Its long period of construction led to it being an eclectic architectural mix of Gothic and Renaissance styles. During the French Revolution, it was stripped out, with many of its historic objects disappearing, and used as a barn, renamed the Temple of Architecture; it was only formerly returned to being a church in 1803.

There are related watercolours by the artist showing the interior of St Eustache, offered at Christie's 5th July 2011, lot 120, a further version was formerly in the collection of John Hinxman (1784-1847), who on his death owned nearly 490 works by Davis.

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