The European Factories and Dutch Folly Fort, Canton from the south-west side of the Canton River, China

Thomas Daniell

Sold

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REF: 2392

Description

Thomas Daniell, R.A. (1749-1840)
The European Factories and Dutch Folly Fort, Canton from the south-west side of the Canton River, China

Inscribed verso: S West View of Canton
Grey washes over pencil on laid Whatman paper
28.6 by 52.4 cm., 11 1/4 by 20 1/2 in.

christies note:
A study for the oil sold in these Rooms, 16 Nov. 1999, lot 266 ('The European Factories and Dutch Folly Fort, Canton, from the south west side of the Canton River'), the same subject engraved in T. Daniell, R.A. and W. Daniell, A.R.A., A Picturesque Voyage to India by Way of China, London, 1810, pl.32 ('South West View of Canton').

Thomas Daniell and his young nephew William visited China twice: on their way to India in 1785, and on their return to England from India in 1793. The first leg of their passage to Calcutta in 1785 was made on the Indiaman Atlas which left them at Whampoa in August 1785. They remained in China, visiting Macao and Canton, before taking a coasting vessel to Calcutta in the spring of 1786. They returned to China, after their famous tour of India, in 1793, seeking a safe passage home to England during the war with France and were recorded in Canton from September 1793 until March the following year, joining the convoy of Lord Macartney, returning to England with his embassy in 1794.

The Daniells' Chinese pictures, worked up from their many sketches taken on the China coast in the 1780s and '90s, form the earliest major western pictorial record of China. Thomas Daniell's view of Canton shows the hongs on the waterfront, the focus of trade between China and the West, as they were in 1785, just one year after the Americans ('second-chop Englishmen' as distinguished by the Chinese) were granted an independent concession. The western community were then attempting to negotiate with the Imperial Government over punitive tariff charges, a situation which prompted the arrival of Lord Macartney's embassy to Ch'ien Lung in 1792 and with it, the artist William Alexander who would go on to produce the first western views of the Chinese interior.

Provenance
Anon. sale, Christie's, South Kensington, 15 Oct. 2009, lot 35.

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