SARAH COLEGRAVE
FINE ART

Water Carriers

Alfred George Stevens

Sold



REF: 322881

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Description

Stevens was born at Blandford Forum, Dorset, the son of a decorator and joiner. At the age of ten he became an assistant to his father but in 1833 the rector of his parish enabled him to travel to Italy when he spent the following nine years studying throughout Italy. Returning to London, in 1843 he obtained a tutorial position in the School of Design at Somerset House, London. In 1850 he became chief artist to the Sheffield firm of H E Hoole & Co, who specialised in bronze and metal work. He returned to London in 1852 and received his first London commission: the vases and lions for the railings of the British Museum. In 1856 he won the competition for the Wellington monument, a massive commission that he did not live to see completed. Because of the enormous amount of time he spent on the Wellington monument he produced little other sculpture. For Dorchester House, Park Lane (demolished 1929) he designed a grand mantelpiece (now in the Victoria & Albert Museum) and he also designed four mosaics of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel for the spandrels under the dome of St Paul’s Cathedral. Stevens died suddenly in his studio in London at the age of 57. Stevens is considered to be the father of a New Sculpture, a movement not really recognised until the end of the 19th century. He moved away from the then staid tradition of British sculpture and looked to the physicality of Renaissance Italy and modern design. This drawing was once in the collection of Alfred Drury RA, perhaps one of the central figures of the New Sculpture movement and a great admirer of Stevens. The picture is accompanied by a letter concerning the 1961 purchase of the drawing and its provenance.