Grey Lady

William Boxall

Sold



REF: 236403

Height: 219.71 cm (86.5")

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Width: 220.98 cm (87")

Framed Height: 271.78 cm (107")

Framed Width: 274.32 cm (108")

Description

Boxall was born near Oxford, the son of Thomas Boxall, an Oxford taxation official. He was educated at Abingdon Grammar School before entering the Royal Academy Schools in 1819. Between 1827 and 1845 he made a number of trips to Italy to study the Old Masters. Initially hoping to make is name as a history and subject painter, Boxall later had to turn to the more lucrative genre of portraiture. He first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1829 being elected an associate member in 1851 and a full member in 1866. Among his friends were William Wordsworth, whose portrait he painted (now in collection of National Portrait Gallery, London), the sculptor John Gibson and the painter Sir Edwin Landseer. He was the executor of the will of Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, his predecessor as Director of the National Gallery. In February 1866 he was appointed director the National Gallery and at this date he seems to have given up painting and concentrated his energies to his directorship. During these either years he oversaw the construction of Edward Middleton Barry's celebrated eastern extension. In 1869 he negotiated the purchase of Sir Robert Peel's collection of Flemish and Dutch paintings and with this purchase the Dutch Golden Age became one the strengths of the Gallery's holdings. Both Michelangelos in the National Gallery were purchased by Boxall, The Entombment in 1868 and the Manchester Madonna in 1870. Due to ill health he resigned from his directorship in 1874. His Self Portrait of Age about Nineteen is in the collection of the National Gallery and his portrait of Whistler aged 14 is in the collection of Glasgow University. The present work appears to be a study for a history or subject picture and is accompanied by the artist's sketchbook which includes related studies. Although unfinished it seems to have been of importance to the artist and his family as it remained in their collection until after his death.

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