

SARAH COLEGRAVE FINE ART

Cupid Sleeping

£8,500

REF: 2143

Artist: RICHARD WESTALL

Height: 36 cm (14 1/4") Width: 44.5 cm (17 1/2") Framed Height: 55 cm - 21 3/4"

Framed Width: 66 cm - 25 1/1"



Short Description

Richard Westall was born in Reepham, near Norwich. Initially apprenticed to a London silver engraver he began studying at the Royal Academy Schools from 1785 and exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy between 1784 and 1836. Westall became an Associate member of the Royal Academy in 1792 and a full member in 1794.

Westall painted in both oil and watercolour, his works being romantic and neoclassical in style. He contributed to both Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and Fuseli's Milton Gallery and was also a prolific book illustrator of both fiction and poetry including works by Sir Walter Scott and Byron, whose portrait he also painted. For a time he was also art master to the young Princess Victoria.

This is Westall's 1792 Royal Academy exhibit (no.448). The subject was inspired by the poem *Cupid Sleeping* by the poetess-actress Mary Darby Robinson, which had been published in the previous year. The poem was dedicated to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and the picture shows the Duchess discovering the sleeping cupid who she then relieves of his bow and arrows. Mrs Robinson was not only the Duchess's protégée but also the first public mistress of the Prince of Wales. William Nutter's engraving of Westall's picture was also dedicated to the Duchess of Devonshire.

Close in a woodbines tangled shade,
The blooming god asleep was laid;
His brows with mossy roses crown'd;
His golden darts lay scatter'd round;
To shade his auburn, curled head,
A purple canopy was spread,
Which gently with the breezes play'd,
And shed around a softend shade.
Upon his downy smiling cheek,
Adorned with many a dimple sleek,
Beamed glowing health and tender blisses,
His coral lip which teem'd with kisses
Ripe, glisten'd with ambrosial dew,
That mock'd the roses deepest hue.-
His quiver on a bough was hung,
His bow lay carelessly unstrung:
His breath mild odour scatter'd round,
His eyes an azure fillet bound:
On every side did zephyrs play,
To fan the sultry beams of day;
While the soft tenants of the grove,
Attend their notes to plaintive Love.

Thus lay the boy-when Devon's feet
Unknowing reach'd the lone retreat;
Surpriz'd, to see the beautiful child
Of every dangerous power beguild !
Approaching near his mossy bed,
Soft whispering to herself she said:-
Thou little imp, whose potent art

Bows low with grief the feeling heart;
Whose thirst insatiate, loves to sip
The nectar from the ruby lip;
Whose barbrous joy is prone to seek
The soft carnation of the cheek;
Now, bid thy tyrant sway farewell,
As thus I break each magic spell:
Snatchd from the bough, where high it hung,
Oer her white shoulder straight she flung
The burnishd quiver, golden dart,
And each vain emblem of his art;
Borne from his powr they now are seen,
The attributes of Beauty's queen!
While Love in secret hides his tears;
Dian the form of Venus wears!

More Information

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| Year | 1792 |
| Medium | Watercolour, oval |
| Country | United Kingdom |