

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**Karl Wilhelm DE HAMILTON (Brussels 1668 - Augsburg 1754)**

## **A Golden Oriole on a Branch**

Watercolour on vellum.

Numbered 197 on the backing board.

242 x 193 mm. (9 1/2 x 7 5/8 in.)

Identified by its distinctive, bright yellow plumage, the Eurasian golden oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*) is found throughout Europe and Western Asia. The bird has a very large range, breeding in the northern hemisphere and spending winters in central and southern Africa.

Beautifully drawn in watercolour or gouache on fine vellum, studies of birds such as this are likely to have been produced as independent works of art for sale to collectors. When painting these highly finished studies of individual birds, Karl Wilhelm de Hamilton chose to depict them standing on a single bare twig or branch, and isolated against a blank background. Two comparable studies of birds on branches by the artist, depicting a finch and a tit and each also drawn on vellum, were sold at auction in London on 2001, while also very similar in style, technique and composition is a gouache drawing of a bullfinch on a gooseberry branch, which appeared at auction in Paris in 2004 and 2012.

Stylistically comparable drawings on vellum of other animal subjects by Karl Wilhelm de Hamilton, executed in the same precise technique, include a sheet of studies of a lizard, a snake and a frog, sold at auction in 1997 and a drawing of three heads of pheasants and partridges, which was also previously in the Dillée collection.

## **Provenance:**

The Dillée family, Paris

Thence by descent to Guillaume Dillée, Paris.

### **Artist description:**

The son and pupil of the Scottish still life painter James de Hamilton (c.1640-1720), who settled and worked in Brussels, Karl (or Carl) Wilhelm de Hamilton was one of a large family of artists active in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. His brothers Ferdinand Phillipp (c.1664-1750) and Johann Georg (1672-1737) were both active in Vienna, while Karl Wilhelm worked mainly in Germany, first in Baden-Baden and later in Augsburg, where he served as court painter to Bishop Alexander Sigismund von der Pfalz-Neuburg. Karl Wilhelm specialized in 'forest-floor' still life landscapes and, in particular, bird subjects. Among his most famous works are several different versions of a landscape known as The Parliament of Birds, based on a poem by Geoffrey Chaucer written around 1380. Paintings by Karl Wilhelm de Hamilton are in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne, the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Dijon, the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe, the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lyon, the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, and elsewhere.