Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Jean BERNARD (Amsterdam 1765 - Amsterdam 1833)

A Painter at an Easel (Self-Portrait?)

Black chalk, with framing lines in black chalk.
Signed and dated 1819 I.B.f at the lower right.
223 x 282 mm. (8 3/4 x 11 1/8 in.)

This drawing may have been intended as a form of self-portrait, although the view of the sitter from the back makes any attempt at a firm identification impossible. (The artist depicted here seems to be working on a small painting of a pastoral scene with animals; a subject typical of Bernard's painted oeuvre.) A signed, undated self-portrait drawing by Bernard, in which he appears middle-aged, is in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Two other self-portrait drawings by the artist are known, both in the Rijksprentenkabinet in Leiden.

Jean Bernard seems to have had a penchant for depicting fellow artists at work, and among stylistically comparable drawings in black chalk by him is a portrait of the painter and museum curator Gerrit Jan Michaëlis (1775-1857) seated at his easel, dated 1823, in the Rijksmuseum. Other drawings of artists by Bernard include a signed and dated watercolour of 1812 of the painter Jan Kobell (1778-1814), seen in his studio and seated at an easel, which appeared at auction in Amsterdam in 1912, and a drawing in red chalk, dated 1809, of the painter Wouter Johannes van Troostwijk (1782-1810), in which the subject is, like the present sheet, shown from behind and working at an easel.

Provenance:

Iohan Quirijn van Regteren Altena, Amsterdam (his posthumous sale stamp [Lugt 4617] on the verso)
Thence by descent.

Literature:

H. van Hall, Portretten van Nederlandse beeldende kunstenaars: Portraits of Dutch painters and other artists of the Low Countries. Specimen of an Iconography, Amsterdam, 1963, p.21, Bernard no.2 (as a self-portrait).

Artist description:

A pupil of the sculptor Christiaan Welmeer, Jean Bernard studied at the Stadstekenacademie in Amsterdam. As an amateur artist, he produced paintings of animals and some portraits, although he was particularly known as a draughtsman and watercolourist. He was also active as an art collector.

Drawings by Jean Bernard are quite rare today. A large group of drawings of animals, birds and fish, as well as studies of plants and flowers, trees, landscapes and figures, was donated to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam by the artist's descendants in 1904. Other drawings by the artist are today in the Teylers Museum in Haarlem, the Rijksprentenkabinet in Leiden, the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo and the Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen in Rotterdam.