

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**Peter DE WINT (Hanley 1784 - London 1849)**

## **Horses and Figures on a Riverside Path**

Watercolour over traces of an underdrawing in pencil, with scratching out, on oatmeal paper.

308 x 469 mm. (12 1/8 x 18 1/2 in.)

In his seminal book *Water-colour Painting in Britain*, published in 1967, Martin Hardie noted that 'De Wint is one of the great technicians of water-colour, one of those who can make colour luminous and keep his darks transparent and sparkling. No artist has interpreted the richness of English landscape with a more sympathetic mind and a more responsive hand...No other painter has ever put on paper with more effect that touch of fine colour from a full-flowing brush, which, as it dries out, transparent and rich in bloom, is the essence of the art of water-colour.'

More recently, the scholar Anne Lyles has written that 'Together with J. M. W. Turner and David Cox, Peter De Wint is a key figure in British watercolor painting in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. He brought to the medium a new fluidity of handling, a rich warmth of palette, and an instinctive boldness and simplicity of composition.'

## **Exhibitions**

London, Martyn Gregory, *An Exhibition of British Watercolours and Drawings 1750 to 1900*, 2016, no.26.

## **Artist description:**

The son of a Staffordshire physician, Peter De Wint was trained in the London studio of the portrait painter and engraver John Raphael Smith. There he met the young artist William Hilton from Lincoln, who was to become a lifelong friend, as well as his brother-in-law. Released from his apprenticeship in 1806, De Wint studied briefly with the landscape artist John Varley but in general seems to have begun his independent career without further training. He exhibited landscape paintings and watercolours at the Royal Academy, the British Institution, the Associated Artists in Water Colours and, in particular, the Old Water Colour Society, where he showed almost yearly between 1810 and his death. His work soon found favour with critics, and he began to establish a particular reputation, with regular sales to a large number of devoted patrons and collectors of his work. De Wint undertook sketching tours throughout England and Wales, with a particular fondness for his native Lincolnshire, as well as Derbyshire, Yorkshire and the Lake District. (He never seems to have had much desire to travel abroad, however, and his only foreign tour was a brief visit to Normandy in 1828.) Among his favourite subjects were rivers and streams, harvest scenes and pastoral views. De Wint also produced a significant number of

topographical landscape prints, many of which were published in book form. The artist died in 1849, at the age of sixty-six. Writing some seventy years later, a fellow watercolourist noted that 'No artist ever came nearer to painting a perfect picture than did Peter DeWint. His sense of colour was more brilliant, his choice of subject matter more apt, and his judgment as to the exact time when a picture should be left, better than any of his contemporaries.'

As Andrew Wilton has written of the artist, 'De Wint's work is characterised by a warm range of browns and greens that obviously derives from [Thomas] Girtin; later, he varied this with touches of unmixed red or blue. But he did not make the study of climate a priority. His chief concern remained the creation of subtle and beautifully articulated compositions based on stretches of open or wooded country, often in the broad Wolds of his own Lincolnshire...When well preserved, his watercolours often display fine atmospheric effects.'