Study for The Trial of Sir William Russell

Sir George Hayter

£140

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REF: 1063

Height: 5.5 cm (2.2")

Width: 7 cm (2.8")

Framed Height: 21 cm (8.3")

Framed Width: 23.5 cm (9.3")

Description

The present work would seem to be an early compositional study in brush and watercolour for Hayter's The Trial of Lord William Russell, in the Ferens Art Gallery, Hull. The study is painted on the back of a fragment of a letter written by the artist. The trial of Lord Russell, a Whig who was convicted of treason for his alleged part in the Rye House Plot of 1683 to assassinate Charles II and his brother and heir, James, Duke of York, took place at the Old Bailey in London. The painting portrays Russell's trial and conviction, shortly before his execution. Completed in 1825, it focuses on Lord Russell's wife, Rachel Russell, looking up at her husband in the dock, while taking notes. This pose in the study is very similar to that of the finished painting, although the other figures have been rearranged. The painting was intended to portray the dramatic and emotional aspects of the trial, particularly emphasising the relationship between Lord Russell and his wife. The Duke of Bedford, a descendant of Lord Russell, commissioned the painting, and it was exhibited at the Royal Academy's summer exhibition.

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