



Sporting Art, Wildlife and Dogs (A828)

30th April 2019

Viewing:

LONDON VIEWING

Sworders Auctioneers, 15 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4EZ

0203 971 2500

8 April -18 April 2019

STANSTED VIEWING

26 April 2019, 9am - 5pm

28 April 2019, 10am - 1pm

29 April 2019, 9am - 5pm

30 April 2019, from 9am

Lot 43

Estimate: £30000 - £50000 +Fees

John Ferneley Sr (1782-1860)

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PORTRAIT OF SIR FRANCIS GRANT ON GRINDAL

Signed and dated 'J.Ferneley/1851' l.r., oil on canvas

86.3 x 112.4cm

Provenance:

Sir Francis Grant, thence by descent.

John Ferneley Sr was arguably the most gifted painter of sporting subjects of his generation. What set him apart was his ability to pinpoint equine characteristics and to faithfully record the surrounding landscape. In this way, his works are some of the most important records of 19th Century Sporting Britain. Ferneley was the sixth son of a Leicestershire wheelwright. His talent was spotted at a young age by the Duke of Rutland, who, in 1801 is said to have persuaded Ferneley's father to allow him to become a pupil of Ben Marshall, himself of Leicestershire origin who was then working in London. Ferneley studied and lodged with Marshall between 1801 and 1804 and was enrolled by him in the Royal Academy Schools. Ferneley's rise to prominence was fast, exhibiting his first picture at the Royal Academy in 1806.

By 1814 he had set up his studio in Melton Mowbray, the hub of the fox-hunting scene with three fashionable packs: the Quorn, the Belvoir and the Cottesmore, providing hunting six days a week. Each winter an influx of 250-300 sportsmen, distinguished by birth, profession and intellect and unaccompanied by their wives, entered into a world obsessed by the chase. Ferneley flourished with a steady stream of patronage and his work became increasingly desirable. His patrons included many of the famous sportsmen of the day and members of some of the most prominent aristocratic families.

Sir Francis Grant PRA (1803-1878) was one such gentleman, his life-long passion for fox-hunting leading him eventually to move to Melton Mowbray. Ferneley and Grant met during the 1820s when Grant studied under him. Following Grant's launch as a professional artist in the 1830s, he and Ferneley frequently collaborated, Grant providing portraits and

Ferneley the animals. Portrait of Sir Francis Grant on Grindal is a wonderful example of this partnership, executed in 1851 when Grant was 48 years old, the face is a self-portrait by Grant.

The present picture is not recorded in Ferneley's account books. This can be explained by the existence of an almost identical version of the work, commissioned by Ferneley's friend and patron Little Gilmore. Portrait of F. Grant, Esq., A.R.A., on a favourite hunter was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1850, no. 536 (see Major G Paget, 'The Melton Mowbray of John Ferneley, 1782-1860'. The account books of John Ferneley, Leicester 1931, facing p. 51). As Ferneley exhibited only 22 works at the Royal Academy throughout his career, he was clearly extremely pleased with the portrait of Grant. Indeed, both artists were so delighted with the work that the following year, they collaborated to bring about the present picture, with a few compositional alterations, for Grant's own personal collection. The work is a fine example of Ferneley's brilliance in rendering a remarkable horse portrait as well as his skill in conveying a sense of space and fresh air in the harmonious palette of the scenery, punctuated by the vibrant red of the huntsmen's coats.