Railway Picture, William Powell Frith, RA

William Powell Frith

Sold

Manfred Schotten Antiques
109 High Street • Burford • Oxfordshire • OX18 4RG
01993 822 302 • schotten@sportantiques.co.uk

REF: 29193

Height: 51.5 cm (20.3")

Width: 111 cm (43.7")

Framed Height: 74 cm (29.1")

Framed Width: 132 cm (52")

Framed Depth: 132 cm (52")

Description

William Powell Frith, The Railway Station Engraving.
An exceptional large and impressive Victorian engraving after the oil painting of Paddington Station by William Powell Frith, simply known as 'The Railway Station'. Frith has produced another of his panoramic narrative works of life showing the hustle and bustle of Victorian life in London's Paddington Station, which was completed a decade early and built by the great Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel. This original engraving was published 1st October 1866 by Henry Graves and Co, Publishers to the Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales, 6 Pall Mall, it is signed in pencil by both artist (William Powell Frith) and engraver (Francis Holl).

William Powell Frith (1819-1909) was an important Victorian English artist, one of the greatest of the nineteenth-century. His teeming panoramic masterpieces, including 'Derby Day' (which is also available) and 'Life at the Seaside - Ramsgate Sands' broke new ground with their depictions of diverse contemporary Victorian crowds. He was elected to the Royal Academy in 1853, presenting 'The Sleeping Model' as his Diploma work.

The original oil painting was purchased by the celebrated London dealer Louis Victor Flatow, with Frith being paid extra not to exhibit it in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Instead it was exhibited at Flatow's London gallery in a single picture exhibition where there was a charge of 1 shilling per person to see it. Proving to be so popular, that once it had been exhibited, it went on to tour the provinces, as well as appearing at international exhibitions in Philadelphia and Paris. There followed a demand for printed copies so the talents of Francis Hall were called upon to complete an etched plate, the engravings went on to bring further popularity to this iconic image. Frith used photographs, associates and friends, including the dealer who paid for it, to help in the execution of his original oil painting which shows in the fine detail of his masterpiece.

Frith has also placed himself and his family in this engraving and can be seen on the platform (center left). His wife is kissing the couple's younger son goodbye, bidding farewell, as he prepares to return to school clutching his cricket bat. Frith and his elder son stand behind. Beside them is a bearded man in a fur coat (modeled on a Venetian refugee nobleman who had given lessons in Italian to Frith's daughters) arguing over his cab fare. Behind him is a soldier holding his son aloft kissing him goodbye. To the left a bride and groom prepare to board the train with the two bridesmaids wishing them well. On the far right an arrest is being made, a gentleman is apprehended in front of the train's guard, who is holding the carriage door open, as he is about to board the train. The two Scotland Yard detectives, complete with top hats, are serving him a warrant for his arrest, one stood ready with a pair of handcuffs. The policemen were modelled by the artists John Brett and Benjamin Robert Haydon, who were re-enacting a well-known story at the time.

There are porters all over the Paddington platform, some carrying the luggage by hand, others using trollies. There are two porters stowing luggage on the roof of a Great Weste...

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