

George Chinnery



Boats near the shore, Madras

Reference: 10855

Dimensions:

Height: 14 cm / 5½ in

Width: 20 cm / 7⅞ in

KT582

Extensively inscribed in the artist's shorthand, pen and brown ink, stamped verso with collector's mark

14 x 20 cm.; 5 ½ x 8 inches

Provenance

Sir Bruce Ingram, OBE, MC (1877-1963), L. 1405a.;

Michael Appleby of St James's, by descent until 2023

The extensive shorthand reads: [upper left]

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

'Masula boat leaving with water carried to ships in the roads /', [upper right]

'The sky... / ... not out', 'The wet foam of the surf

The light part of the picture / ', [lower left]; 'Sand'; [lower right] 'This part not the surf

Boat all wet / all the figures reflected in stronger /The colour is to(o) ex... the same as the sea'.

There was no harbour at Madras at this time so the masula boats had to row a long distance out from the shore to the Indiamen anchored out in the 'roads'. The figures are a combination of boatmen and women with waterpots on their heads, loading the boat with water for the ships. The flat-bottomed masula boats, made from planks of mango wood sewn together with coconut fibres, were used to row passengers to and from the ships as well as for supplies. During the western monsoon season at the end of the year the surf could be quite violent and if the flag on the flagstaff of Fort St. George was lowered, ships were unloaded of cargo or passengers at their own risk.

Chinnery arrived in Madras in 1802 and was to stay for four and a half years. The lively draughtsmanship shown in the present drawing is typical of his style at this period.

Sir Bruce Ingram was a journalist and editor of 'The Illustrated London News' from 1900. He was particularly interested in marine drawings and collected over three thousand, including over six hundred drawings by the Van de Velde. For further information about his collecting see Luke Herrmann and Michael Robinson, 'Burlington Magazine', May 1963, 'Sir Bruce Ingram as a collector of drawings'.