

William Leighton Leitch



Osborne House and the terrace, Isle of Wight

Reference: 11214

Dimensions:

Height: 32.30 cm / 12³/₄ in

Width: 46.50 cm / 18¹/₄ in

Stamped with the artist's stamp l.l., watercolour over pencil heightened with white on rough buff paper

32.3 x 46.5 cm; 12 5/8 x 18 1/4 inches

Provenance: Christie's, London, the Artist's Studio sale, March 13 -17, 1884 (13 gns);

The Fine Art Society, London, April 1966;

Hermione Hobhouse (1933-2014);

By family descent until 2020

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

Exhibited: Glasgow International Exhibition, 1888

Literature: Delia Millar, 'The Victorian Watercolours in the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen', 2 vols., London, 1995, no. 3422

Osborne House on the Isle of Wight was a summer retreat built for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert between 1845 and 1851, designed by Albert himself in the style of an Italian palazzo. The stone lions shown here at the foot of the steps, copied from the antique, were acquired in January 1851, and were in place by 9 March 1851. The groups of children possibly include Princess Helena and Princess Louise, described by their mother as 'looking extremely pretty in little blue silk polkas, with white silk hats' (Queen Victoria's Journal, 15 August 1851).

There is another smaller version of this watercolour in the Royal Collection dated August 1851 (RCIN 919847). The present drawing would seem to be the preliminary drawing as passages are unfinished. The version in the Royal Collection has an additional figure group at the bottom of the stairs. Leitch also drew two further watercolours of Osborne under construction drawn circa 1847 (RCIN 91982 and 91983). William Leighton Leitch was one of Queen Victoria's favourite watercolour artists, and she commissioned many watercolours from him for her View Albums. Leitch also taught watercolour to the Queen and her children, all of whom copied his work. He stayed at Osborne from 31 July 1851 and for most of August that year. It has been suggested that this drawing may have been made as a drawing lesson for some members of the Royal Family.

Hermione Hobhouse was an architectural historian and preservation campaigner. During her distinguished career, during which she acted as secretary of 'The Victorian Society' from 1976-1983, she wrote numerous books, including Prince Albert: His Life and Work, 1983.

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