

Two engravings with aquatint and original hand colour, large closed tear, skilfully repaired.

A DEDICATED FOLLOWER OF FASHION

[1] View in the Colosseum Regents Park London, Summer Fashions for 1836; [2] View, Windsor Castle, Summer Fashions for 1841.

Author
READ, B[enjamin]

Publication date
1836 and 1841.

Publisher
B. Read, 12 Hart St. Bloomsbury Sq., & Broad Way New York America,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Two engravings with aquatint and original hand colour, large closed tear, skilfully repaired.

Dimensions
Image: [1] 396 by 569mm (15.5 by 22.5 inches). [2] 410 by 580mm (16 by 23 inches). Sheet: each 500 by 670mm (19.75 by 26.5 inches).

Notes
Benjamin Read’s Regency fashion prints were the most successful advertising of their day. Read was a tailor by profession, but realised the potential for producing high quality prints of his wares. Ralph Hyde suggests that Read was inspired originally by the ‘Monstrosities’ of George Cruikshank, the

satirist, who would produce an annual print of the worst offenders against fashion and the latest ridiculous trends. Read initially employed Cruikshank's younger brother, Robert, but by the time these examples were produced his name had disappeared from the prints. They were particularly effective not only because of their distinctive style and elegant colour, but also because they showed Read's clothes on fashionable people in fashionable surroundings. The Colosseum in Regent's Park, for example, was a temporary structure housing amongst other things an enormous panoramic painting of London, a popular attraction. They allowed the viewer to imagine themselves not only in the clothes but also in the milieu.

As he sold mainly menswear, which was less subject to change, Read would issue only two prints a year, for summer and winter fashions. They were so well-known that they soon had imitators, and Read even offered a service to improve other tailors' fashion plates before publication.

Bibliography

Ralph Hyde and Valerie Cumming, 'The Prints of Benjamin Read, Tailor and Printmaker' Print Quarterly 17 (2000), pp.262-84.

Provenance

Price: £5000

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