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A portrait of William Cowper after George Romney

SOLD

REF: 4405

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## Short Description

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in plain gilt-metal frame the reverse inscribed William Cowper after the sketch by Romney attributed to Ozias Humphry (sic)  
pencil and watercolour on card

William Cowper (1731-1800) was a poet known for his depiction's of daily life and the English Countryside. Hugely popular in his day, he was called the 'best modern poet' by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Deeply religious he also wrote hymns and abolitionist poems.

This portrait is based on the 1792 portrait of Cowper by George Romney, now in the National Portrait Gallery London. That portrait was engraved by William Blake in 1802 as the frontispiece for *The Life and Posthumous Writings of William Cowper* by William Hayley, 1803.

Humphry would have known Cowper through his friendship with Joseph Hill, who was Lord Thurlow's secretary. Humphry corresponded with Hill, who at the time was staying at Belvoir Castle. The letters are endorsed with the statement in Humphry's writing, that Hill was the friend of Cowper the Poet. Humphry wanted a place in which he could safely deposit the Duke of Dorset's miniatures. Hill had an apartment which he said was exceedingly dry and he wrote and told Humphry that he was quite at liberty to send the miniatures there for some time. (cf. Williamson, *Life and Works of Ozias Humphrey*, R.A., p. 197)

## More Information

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### Provenance

Bonhams, London, Property of a Gentleman, 21  
November, 1995, lot 80  
Robert S Pirie Collection