

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST



THOMAS ROWLANDSON

1756 - London - 1827

The rustic Courtship

Pen and grey ink and watercolour. Executed probably after 1780.

174 by 233 mm

PROVENANCE: With Spink-Leger, London – Private collection, Great Britain

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST

Thomas Rowlandson was admitted to the Royal Academy Schools in 1772 at the age of only 15. He became one of the most successful satirical printmakers of his day, producing social and political caricatures. He made frequent trips to France before the Revolution of 1789. From 1780, influenced by French artistic practice, he began to produce tinted watercolour drawings, moving away from the pure pen and grey wash that he had favoured previously.¹

Rowlandson was one of the most vibrant and dextrous draughtsman of the eighteenth century – most of his drawings are gently humorous, and in some cases objective, records of urban and rustic life. The large corpus of his drawings provides a detailed pictorial account of everyday life in Georgian England. Rowlandson's reputation suffered in the prudish moral climate of Victorian England, since he was never afraid to tackle scenes of rollicking sexuality. He served up the foibles of his time with superb skill, exuberant humour, unflinching insight, and occasional cruelty.

His friend Henry Angelo (1756-1835) noted in his *Reminiscences*²: „Everyone at all acquainted with the arts must well know the caricature works of that very eccentric genius: the extent of his talent, however, as a draughtsman is not so generally known. . . His powers indeed were so versatile, and his fancy so rich, that every species of composition flowed from his pen with equal facility”³

¹ Carolin Palmer, *Great British Drawings*, exhib. cat., 26 March – 31 August 2015, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

² The *Reminiscences of Henry Angelo* are a collection of anecdotes loosely connected with the author. They detail life in London society and include passages on everything from travel and the Royal Family to art, artists, musicians and actors. No doubt they were specially selected to be as amusing or informative as possible for the reader.

³ Henry Angelo, *The Reminiscences of Henry Angelo*, London, 1828-30, vol. I, p. 233.