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ROTHERHITHE

James MacNeil Whistler, 1859

A framed and mounted dry point etching by the American artist James Whistler, showing Rotherhithe on the London River from his Thames Set. Etched 1860 it was printed and issued in 1871 under the title 'Wapping' as one of the 'Sixteen Etchings of Scenes on the Thames, and Other Subjects,' by Ellis and Green of Covent Garden, in editions of one hundred. This original etching is signed and dated by the artist on the plate. The Thames is shown looking down-river through a grid of ships' rigging, from the balcony of the Angel Public House at Rotherhithe. This famous scene still exists although much altered by the decline of the London Docks, while the public house from which it was captured remains largely un-altered with its balcony still affording splendid views along the river.

DIMENSIONS: 1cm (0^{1/2}") Wide

STOCK CODE: AD1606



HISTORY

"During his formative years in Paris in the 1850s, Whistler was influenced by the injunctions of the poet and theorist Charles Baudelaire that artists should take subjects from 'modern life' and seek a new beauty in the teeming cities. Whistler's first major suite of prints, his 'French Set' brought critical acclaim but disappointing sales. Seeking more generous patrons, he moved to London in 1859. Initially under the influence of his brother-in-law Francis Seymour Haden, a pioneer of the 'etching revival', he began a series of superbly observed and finely detailed views of the River Thames with its shipping, thriving wharves and picturesque characters.

The subject and composition are closely related to Whistler's brilliantly innovative oil painting

of the same year, Wapping, (National Gallery of Art, Washington), which he kept secret from rivals such as Courbet for fear that his ideas would stolen.”

Victoria and Albert Museum