

6676/45

Thomas Gainsborough

Portrait de l'artiste.

photo. envoyée par Bradford Perin
Grandpère Antique Shop.

California.

CABLE ADDRESS "SERENDIPITY"
TELEPHONE FAIR OAKS 7111
BENTLEY CODE

2
EUROPEAN AGENT, G. C. BERESFORD
20 YEOMAN'S ROW, LONDON, S.W.
TELEPHONE KENSINGTON 3953

The Serendipity Antique Shop

BRADFORD PERIN, PROPRIETOR
30 SOUTH LOS ROBLES AVENUE
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

January 18, 1924.

To the Curator
Royal Museum.
Brussels, Bel.

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to inform you
of the discovery of a portrait of Thomas
Gainsborough, painted by himself.

A photograph of the portrait
together with an account of the discovery
is enclosed for your files.

Faithfully yours,

Bradford Perin

Enc.

2

To Curators of Museums and Art Galleries and to Librarians:

GAINSBOROUGH

By Himself, circa 1755

A brief account of how I came to own this masterpiece and how after ten years its real beauty and importance were revealed to me:

In September 1913 I found an old oil painting at the shop of W. Smith & Sons, Stotfold, Bedfordshire, England. Mr. Smith mentioned that he had bought it at a local auction. The painting represented the head and shoulders of a young man of the 18th century. Apart from being very dirty, as a whole, the paint on the right shoulder and in the background was badly cracked. The canvas had been glued over another canvas already stretched, and on the back of which was written in pencil, "Moreland." The painting was unframed and had a little ring screwed into the top of the stretcher. I did not believe that Moreland could have painted such a portrait as the drawing of the head was that of a portraitist rather than of a "genre" painter. The shoulder was faulty in its construction but I excused that on the grounds of haste. There was no color worth considering even in the face. However, Mr. Smith was only asking £3.0.0 for his picture so I bought it.

Ten years elapsed before I decided to have the painting cleaned. As Mr. Eduardo F. Squadrilli, connoisseur and expert on old masters, temporarily residing in Pasadena, had successfully cleaned some old paintings belonging to me, I entrusted the portrait sketch to him. In the process of cleaning Mr. Squadrilli discovered that the paint of the coat and background was extraneous and that the face as well as the hair had been painted over. He notified me at once and after seeing the state of my picture I authorized him to proceed as we both felt that the cleaning was revealing a master's technique. My first thought was "Gainsborough" and Mr. Squadrilli agreed with me.

When the cleaning was finished, we identified it as a portrait of Gainsborough.

After a careful examination of other paintings by Gainsborough, Mr. Squadrilli made the following statement to me:

"Your sketch is without any doubt a portrait of Gainsborough. It was painted by Gainsborough himself and may be considered one of his best portraits, because of its unequaled flesh color, superb draughtsmanship and depth of expression. The head has been cut from a larger canvas as it was apparently intended for a full size portrait."

Dimensions of original 12½ inches wide, 17 inches high.

W. Morrill, Liner, is sunken on the back of the stretcher.

January 1924.

BRADFORD PERIN,