

Portrait of Stephen Granger

Augustus John O.M, R.A

£900



REF: 1226

Height: 27 cm (10.6")

Width: 20 cm (7.9")

Framed Height: 52 cm (20.5")

Framed Width: 43 cm (16.9")

Description

This sensitive and finely observed study is a very rare example of a drawing Augustus John made as part of the development of a portrait etching. In the mid-1900s John was at the height of his powers as both a portrait draughtsman and an etcher, and the present work reflects both achievements. Stephen Granger was a fellow Slade School graduate and exhibited at the New English Art Club's 1906 exhibition, but little is known about his work as an artist. John made three etched portraits of Granger in 1906. The present work was used as the design for the 'Bust of Stephen Granger: full face', catalogue No. 16 in Campbell Dodgson's catalogue of John's etchings. In the print John created variations of light and shade through deft work with the etching needle and most crucially modulations of the wiping of ink from the plate prior to printing. In order to understand how such modulations might work in the image, John used the unusual technique of shading in the drawing with his pencil, no doubt smoothed and smudged with the ball of his hand, then scraped into these areas with the etching needle to achieve his lights, no doubt also lightening and shading passages by rubbing with his hand. John even signed the drawing with the etching needle, on the back of the sheet. The vertical and horizontal pencil lines on the right and bottom of the drawing do not actually indicate the proposed edges of the etching and were a common device used by the artist in his drawings, as if as a sign off, although two lines made with the needle towards the top of the sheet do correspond approximately with the etching plate.