

# ***Stiebel, Ltd.***

**Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg (Strasbourg 1740-1812 Chiswick, England) (attr.to)**

“Rescue From a Conflagration”

Watercolor, pen and black ink and pencil

18 x 12 ½ inches (45.5 x 31.5 cm)

Born in Strasbourg, Loutherbourg moved to Paris in 1755 where he trained in the studio of Charles-André Van Loo and later François Casanova. He exhibited paintings in the Paris Salons from 1762 where his work was praised by Diderot. He specialized in creating the dramatic effects of weather, fires, shipwrecks, maritime bombardments and the like, which establish him in art history as an early exponent of Romanticism.

He was elected to the French Royal Academy in 1767 and was subsequently named *peintre du roi*. His special talents led to his employment by David Garrick as a designer for the Drury Lane Theater from 1772 where he scored major successes with inventive sets and lighting. He was made a member of the British Royal Academy in 1780. In 1781 he created a miniature theater that he called the Eidophusikon, where viewers would look through a 6 foot square opening to see successive pictures painted on fine taffeta brought to life with reflecting mirrors and colored lights projected from behind.

The present sheet has been inscribed on the verso “par Germain de St. Aubin”, referring to the little-known son of the famous graphic artist Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, but this attribution appears groundless.

The sheet bears the characteristics of several of Loutherbourg’s major works here a conflagration creates a scene of intense drama (*Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, 1796, *Great Fire of London*, 1797, and *Coalbrookdale by Night*, 1801). The deep diagonal perspective created here and balanced by repoussoir figures reacting to the disaster can be seen in many of his compositions (e.g. watercolor study for the Painting for the Apprentices Lodge, 1787).