



Mezzotint.

## GEORGE STUBBS'S TIGRESS

**A Tigress. Painted by Geo Stubbs, Engraved by Rob Laurie, From a Capital Picture by Geo Stubbs in the possession of his grace the Duke of Marlborough.**

### Author

STUBBS, G[eorge]; and Robert LAURIE

### Publication date

12 Nov 1800.

### Publisher

Republished by Robt. Laurie & Jas Whittle No 53 Fleet St, London, (Successors to the late Mr Robert Sayer).

### Publication place

London,

### Physical description

Mezzotint.

### Dimensions

480 by 580mm (19 by 22.75 inches).

### Notes

The present example is a copy of Dixon's celebrated print first published in 1772, taken from a life size painting at Blenheim Palace, and was "the most highly praised print after Stubbs in its day". The plate was reviewed in 'The Monthly Magazine' in February 1802:

“... a print of a tiger, from Stubbs, which, after being many years out of print, is re-engraved and re-published by Laurie and Whittle. The first copy engraven from this picture was by the celebrated artist, Mr. John Dixon, and the writer of this article is inclined to think, that, without any exception, it was the finest mezzotinto that ever was engraved. The plate was destroyed by fire. The present copy... [is] engraved in a very respectable style”.

George Stubbs (1724-1806) was one of the greatest of all British animal painters. Little is known about his formative years, although he probably worked in his father's currier and leather business until the age of 15 or 16. Following his father's death in 1741 he was briefly apprenticed to the Lanchaire painter and engraver Hamlet Winstanley, however, he objected to the monotonous copying he was tasked with soon left. During the 1740s he worked as a portrait painter in the North of England and from about 1745 to 1751 he studied human anatomy at York County Hospital. He had had a passion for anatomy from his childhood, and one of his earliest surviving works is a set of illustrations for a textbook on midwifery which was published in 1751.

In 1754 Stubbs visited Italy. Forty years later he told Ozias Humphry that his motive for going to Italy was, “to convince himself that nature was and is always superior to art whether Greek or Roman, and having renewed this conviction he immediately resolved upon returning home”. In 1756 he rented a farmhouse in the village of Horkstow, Lincolnshire, and spent 18 months dissecting horses, assisted by his common-law wife, Mary Spencer. He moved to London in about 1759 and in 1766 published *The anatomy of the Horse*. The original drawings are now in the collection of the Royal Academy.

Even before his book was published, Stubbs's drawings were seen by leading aristocratic patrons, who recognised that his work was more accurate than that of earlier horse painters such as James Seymour, Peter Tillemans and John Wootton. In 1759 the 3rd Duke of Richmond commissioned three large pictures from him, and his career was soon secure. By 1763 he had produced works for several more dukes and other lords and was able to buy a house in Marylebone, a fashionable part of London, where he lived for the rest of his life.

## **Bibliography**

George Stubbs, 'The Complete Engraved Works' Lennox-Boyd, Dixon, Clayton 139 state 1.

## **Provenance**

**Price:** £8000

**Inventory reference:** 1060