

JOHN MITCHELL

FINE PAINTINGS

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John Thomas Serres (1759 - 1825)

A Frigate leaving Plymouth Sound, with other Vessels nearby

pen and ink, and watercolour
9 x 25 in. (23 x 63.5 cm.)
signed and dated 1801

Provenance:
Sir Bruce Ingram;
with John Appleby, London and Jersey.

This drawing epitomizes Serres' accuracy in matters nautical and topographical: the ship may represent the 38-gun HMS Clyde on which Serres spent time with the Channel Fleet at the end of 1799 and in the summer of 1800, when he made a continuous panorama of the entire Biscay coast from Brest to El Ferrol, now preserved in the UK Hydrographic Office. The latter, together with Serres' important surveying work for the Admiralty during the blockade of Brest, form the subject of a fascinating book (see below) by Michael Barritt, to whom I am grateful for identifying the landmarks in this drawing. Just to the right of the frigate's stern is Mount Edgcumbe House; to the right again, a ship is seen at anchor in the Barn Pool. Drake's (or St Nicholas') Island is shown in transit with The Narrows, with vessels laid up in the Hamoaze beyond.

Bibliography:
M.K.Barritt, Eyes of the Admiralty - J.T.Serres, An Artist in the Channel Fleet 1799-1800, (2008)