

Basic Detail Report



The Harlot's Progress 1

Date

1732

Primary Maker

William Hogarth

Medium

Etching and engraving

Description

Plate I Arrival in London, Ensnared by a Procuress Etching and Engraving. 1732. 32.2 x 39.6 cm. State I Engraver William Hogarth (1697-1764) Below plate: A Harlot's Progress, Plate 1. Wm. Hogarth invt. pinx. t. et. sculp. t. Paulson 121. PT1090 Moll Hackabout arrives at the Bell Inn in London. Moll has come to London to seek work as a seamstress, suggested by the scissors and pincushion hanging from her arm. After her cousin fails to meet Moll, Mother Needham, a brothel-keeper, introduces herself. But Mother Needham suggests another type of work for the pretty girl from the countryside. The clergyman ignores Moll's plight, just as he ignores his horse knocking over a pile of pans that allude to Moll's imminent moral "fall". Here Hogarth hints that the Church ignored the plight of the poor in society. Standing behind them we see the notorious "rake" Colonel Francis Charteris and his pimp, John Gourlay, for whom Mother Needham is procuring poor Moll. The inn sign, with a picture of a bell, may refer to the belle, (French for beautiful woman) newly arrived from the country. The bell also echoes the shape of the dresses that both Moll and "Mother" Needham are wearing. The dead goose in the basket near Moll's trunk is a visual hint at her gullibility, as the word goose was slang for silly.

Dimensions

Silk, Squalor & Scandal, Cuming Museum 23 10 07 - 16 2 08