

238 Putnam Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139
March 13, 1996

FAX 212/606-7039
Ms. Susan Imbriani
American Painting, Drawings
and Sculpture Department
Sotheby's
1334 York Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Ms. Imbriani:

Re: Eastman Johnson, Three Studies for one of the Counterfeiters, oil on canvas, 16 x 15 inches. Initialed at lower left, "E.J.", but not in Johnson's usual style.

I examined this painting on March 9, 1996, at Sotheby's. In my opinion it was painted by the American genre and portrait painter, Eastman Johnson (1824-1906).

The three studies in oil indicate Johnson's ability to render individual physiognomy with great skill. Although the title is "three studies for one of the counterfeiters," there are actually two studies of one person, who is not included in the finished painting, and one study of the figure whom Johnson actually selected. The heads are quite finished: the lights and darks give all of them a strong three-dimensional aspect; the highlights are deftly placed. This study, like The Counterfeiters, for which it was a study, was done during Johnson's years at The Hague (1851-55). When Johnson returned to the United States in 1855, he was a skilled genre painter.

The painting was included as number 25 in the estate sale of Johnson's work, held on February 26 and 27, 1907, at the American Art Galleries in New York.

I plan to include this painting in my catalogue raisonné of Johnson's work.

Sincerely,

Patricia Hills
author, Eastman Johnson, 1972