



Fireworks in Green Park

MONDHARE, Louis-Joseph.

Décoration du Feu d'Artifice tiré à Londres en Rejouissance de la Paix en 1763.

Paris: Modhare, c.1763. Original colour. Sheet 245 x 390mm.

£400

A view of a fireworks display held in Green Park to celebrate (according to the title) the Treaty of Paris that ended the Seven Years' War. However this is an example of a French publisher recycling an old plate: this scene is actually of an earlier (and much more famous) display, celebrating the end of a different war. The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle of October 1748 ended the War of the Austrian Succession in which Britain's main opponent was again France. Because the war had been so unpopular (George II was seen as using British resources to fight for a German cause), a firework spectacular was organised by the Duke of Montague to regain popular support. George Frideric Handel was commissioned to write his 'Music for the Royal Fireworks' and the architect Giovanni Niccolo Servandoni built a wooden Doric 'Temple of Peace' from which to launch the fireworks. However the display did not go as planned: misfires set fire to the right pavilion of the Temple and rockets set a woman's clothes alight and injured several soldiers. As his temple burned Servandoni attacked Montagu with a sword.



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