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RECENT ACQUISITIONS
Lowell Libson
& Jonny Yarker Ltd
British Art

TEFAF NEW YORK FALL
October 27 – 31, 2018

THE WINTER SHOW, NEW YORK
January 18 – 27, 2019

TEFAF MAASSTRICHT
March 16 – 24, 2019
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The gallery is open by appointment, Monday to Friday. The entrance is in Old Burlington Street.

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We are excited to be able to present in this latest catalogue of Recent Acquisitions a group of works, largely paintings, which include famous and unusually well documented works by Angelica Kauffman, Joseph Wright of Derby, Thomas Jones, Sir David Wilkie and Thomas Gainsborough. This follows on from the success of our ground-breaking exhibition The Spirit & Force of Art: Drawing in Britain 1600–1750.

Angelica Kauffman’s magnificent Virgil writing his epitaph at Brindisi, perhaps her most sophisticated neo-classical historical painting in private hands, is recorded in her studio book and praised in print the same year by her biographer Giovanni Gherardo De Rossi. We are delighted to be offering this exceptional painting not least because it underscores the international influence and reach of so many British artists and patrons.

Documentation is an important theme running through this catalogue. Both the important portraits by Joseph Wright of Derby are carefully recorded in his surviving account book and in the case of the remarkable double portrait of Dr Thomas Wilson and his adopted daughter Catherine Macaulay Wright’s own correspondence survives describing the circumstances of the commission. The remarkable portrait, Old John Tonson, Head Waiter at the King’s Head, Derby (detail shown opposite) numbers amongst the most sympathetic and sophisticated portrait heads of the period. We are able to fully identify the sitter for the first time.

David Wilkie’s major oil The Gentle Shepherd was the subject of a piece of sustained criticism by the great Scottish writer James Hogg.

This catalogue, as always, has been a collaborative work and we are grateful to all our friends and colleagues who have helped in its preparation, particularly Cressida St Aubyn. We look forward to greeting many friends over the coming months at TEFAF New York Fall, The Winter Show, New York and at TEFAF Maastricht as well as at our gallery and on our travels.

LOWELL LIBSON

JONNY TARKER
Oil on canvas
39 x 49½ inches; 99.1 x 125.7 cm.
Signed and dated ‘Angelica Kauffman pinx. 1785’

COLLECTIONS
Commissioned by George Bowles (d.1817), The Grove, Wanstead; Rebecca Bowles Rushout, his sister, 1818; Anne Rushout, her daughter, Wanstead Grove (inventory of 1826); Harriet Rushout Cockwell, her sister, 1851; Charles Rushout, her son, 1869; Rushout Sale, Phillips & Neale, December 9, 1879, £99.15s to ‘Aldis’; 37 Hill Street, London, c.1890–1974; Christie’s, London November 22, 1974, lot 163; Herner Wengraf Gallery, London, 1974; Private collection, USA, to 2005; Private collection, USA, to 2018

LITERATURE
Giovanni Gherardo De Rossi, Memorie per le belle Arti, April 1785, p.53–54;

EXHIBITED
London, Royal Academy, 1786, no.196;

ENGRAVED
By Thomas Burke, Virgil Writing his Epitaph at Brundisi, published 1794.

This large-scale historical canvas by Angelica Kauffman was painted in Naples in 1785. It depicts the Roman poet Virgil writing his epitaph in the presence of his two friends, the poets Varius and Tucca, a scene derived from Suetonius. In terms of its size, subject and composition Virgil Writing his Epitaph at Brundisi is not only one of Kauffman’s greatest paintings, it is one of the most ambitious neo-classical compositions produced in Italy in the 1780s. The painting featured prominently in the ground-breaking exhibition ‘Women Artists: 1550–1950’ curated by Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin in 1976.

By 1785 Kauffman was one of the leading painters in Europe, she had achieved considerable success in Britain, exhibiting extensively at the Royal Academy of which she was a founder member. Kauffman had been born in Graubünden, Switzerland, the only child of the Austrian painter Johann Joseph Kauffman. In 1742 Kauffman’s father moved his family to Italy where, her early biographers record that she rapidly distinguished herself as a prodigy of both music and art. Kauffman decided to pursue a career as a painter and undertook a formal Grand Tour of Italy in 1759 before settling in Rome in 1763. There she befriended a prominent circle of British neo-classical painters including Gavin Hamilton, Nathaniel Dance and Benjamin West. These contacts undoubtedly influenced her aspiration to create history paintings of classical, mythological and historical subjects, a rare ambition for a female artist. Encouraged by her contacts with Anglo-Saxon painters, Kauffman travelled to London in 1766 where she met and was befriended by Joshua Reynolds who became instrumental in...
promoting her career. In London she established a profitable and celebrated portrait practice working for a fashionable clientele and providing decorative panels for neo-classical interiors. But, as Wendy Woolf Vinson has observed: "Kauffman was not able to achieve fully her high aspiration to produce large-scale history paintings."

In 1782 Kauffman returned to Rome after marrying the Italian decorative painter Antonio Zucchi, who yielded his own career to manage his spouse’s finances. Economics partly motivated their move, since Meng’s recent death and Batrios’s slowing career positioned Kauffman as Rome’s dominant portraitist, decisively secured by the 1783 commission to paint the Neapolitan royal family. Moreover, the explosion of the Grand Tour among the nobility of northern and eastern Europe opened vast new markets for the multilingual painter. Kauffman and Zucchi occupied grand quarters on via Sistina, formerly the studio of Mengs, at the top of the Spanish Steps. Kauffman therefore cast herself as the prime heir to the classicising tradition of Roman painting.

But most importantly the return to Rome situated Kauffman at the creative centre of Europe in close proximity to the greatest historical work. Commissioned by her most prolific and consistent patron George Bowles, the three works are universally recognised as Kauffmans most significant historical compositions. In her studio-book, kept by Zucchi, the present painting is described as: "Virgil, ill and nearing his death, writing his epitaph in the presence of his two friends, the poets Varius and Tucca, who are sorrowful at the approaching loss of their friend. The muse in sadnen guards safely the writings of the Aeneid."

The painting shows Virgil on his deathbed, completing the last word of his self-composed epitaph: "Mantua me geminit; calabria rapuere; temet nunc Parthenopeae casin us, rura, duces." (Mantua gave me light; Calabria snatched me away; now Naples holds me; I sang of shepherds, fields, and wars.) The last refers to the subjects of Virgil’s three major works the Bucolics, the Georgics and the Aeneid, the titles of which can be read on the rolls in the parchment case on the left of the composition. Suetonius’s Life of Virgil is one source for the legend that the poet wished his unfinished manuscript of the Aeneid to be burned. Instead, Varius Rufos and Plotius Tucca emended the epic poem after Virgil’s death, and operating under the instructions of the poet’s long-time patron and benefactor, the Emperor Augustus, had it published. In the painting Kauffman has placed a bust of Augustus on the table to the right of the composition. Kauffman’s fascination with the legends of Virgil’s death can be traced back to her first visit to Naples, July 1763 to April 1764, at which time she sketched Virgil’s tomb, a dilapidated columbarium on the side of Mount Posilippo, long rumoured to be (but no longer recognised as) the poet’s last resting place. At the bottom of her page, Kauffman copied an inscription from inside the tomb—a sixteenth-century couplet, ending with the same phrase ("…sang of shepherds, fields, and wars") as in Virgil’s epitaph.

The other two paintings commissioned by Bowles and executed by Kauffman as part of the sequence were Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi, now in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond and Play the Younger and His Mother at Misceneum now in the Princeton University Art Gallery. The Cornelia is widely regarded as Kauffman’s greatest historical work; a composition she returned to on many occasions and a picture that influenced works by Benjamin West, Pierre Peyron, Louis Gauffier, and Vincenzo Camuccini. The iconographical links between the three canvases have not yet received adequate explanation. Virgil’s Writing his Epitaph is arguably Kauffman’s most ambitious historical composition pointing to her determination to tackle a subject-matter
traditionally beyond the scope of female painters. Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi and Pliny the Younger and his Mother at Misenum are both compositions that celebrate female virtue. Cornelia particularly epitomises a view of women as modest and self-abnegating, uniting motherly love, domestic happiness and benevolent virtue. The painting is correspondingly handled in a recognisably feminine register, employing Kauffman’s trademark repertory of gracefully drawn figures, tender gestures, and gentle, harmonious colouring. This is in stark contrast to the masculine subject-and-setting and frieze-like composition simultaneously point to Kauffman’s appreciation of antiquity and her sensitivity to the pictorial innovations of her contemporaries. Kauffman must have been aware of Jacques-Louis David’s Oath of the Horatii which had been completed and displayed in his Roman studio to great applause shortly before her departure for Naples in the summer of 1785. Indeed, in a departure from Kauffman’s normal technique, Virgil Writing his Epitaph is handled in a distinctly Davidian manner, the background walls indicated by a mass of feathery brushstrokes whilst the seated figure of Virgil’s friend recalling the seated, mourning figures on David’s Compositionally Kauffman’s painting develops certain elements of Poussin’s Eumolpus, the seated friend taking the dying man’s hand, is transformed into Virgil himself writing his own epitaph, whilst Eumolpus’s mourning family are replaced by the weeping muse. Virgil Writing his Epitaph is one of the artist’s most rigorous and precise attempts at archaeological fidelity. The furniture that Kauffman includes – the couch, table, scroll holder, stools, and lyre – are all derived from plates in Memorie per le belle Arti, published as one of Kauffman’s most ambitious, best preserved and grandest historical compositions, Virgil Writing his Own Epitaph, is a remarkable testament to her abilities as a painter. The sophistication of the frieze-like composition and subject matter raise the question of Kauffman’s role in the emergence of European neo-classicism. Extract from Giovanni Gherardo de Rossi writing in Memorie per le belle Arti, April 1785, pp.111-111: ‘In una di esse in figure alte circa due palmi ha dipinta la morte di Virgilio. Non ebbe egli sublime poeta nella sua navigazione così prospere i mari marini, come à avere un augurato sepolcro Onorio nell’età terrena, onde abbandonato dei viri un poema viaggio finii a Brindisi in suoi giorni, e nella ultima ora della vita compone quei veri versi, che poi si curarono sepolti sulla sua tomba. La nostro Pittura ha rappresentato il poeta nell’atto, che subito sullo stendente di scrivere la ultima parola dell’epitaffio. Tutt’a una visse assistero l’infelice amico, e mostrò l’uno l’altro accanto al letto time in una mano il calice, del quale si serve il poeta, che scrive, ilobo in piedi dietro il letto mossa nel colui una sommisione. La Musa vi particolarmente introdotta; giacché intrudendo fallemove, mentre mira alla dona di morte che dietro vanno sigili, donde la mano verso il volume dello opere del medesimo, quasi cogli versi custode di quei parti, che il paterno rigore aveva destinati alle simme. Virgilio moribondo è in un attiggiamente naturalistico per un armeno, che ricchiamò con istesso a tutti i suoi spirti ad un ultimo canto, e non c’è più il legare la morte vin cinie, ma una morte però placida, e tranquilla. Il dolore dei due amici è ben espressa, ma quello della Musa mostra un se ne a chi più nobil, e manifesto; necessaria anzietura negli Artisti, quando dovero porre al confronto le passioni di un armeno, con quelli di un Deità.’

9. Anthony Clark was the first to identify the impact of David’s work on Kauffman’s historical compositions made in Naples in 1785. See Anthony Clark, Studies in Roman Eighteenth-Century Painting, Washington, 1961, p.157.
10. Giovanni Gherardo de Rossi writing in Memorie per le belle Arti, April 1785, pp.111-111.

Notes
Casts of this statuette became the essential apparatus for artists in the eighteenth century and as Joseph Nollekens noted it was ‘so well known to every draughtsman who assiduously studies his art.’ It is a reduced model of the great anatomist William Hunter’s first plaster écorché, made for teaching at the Society of Artists, which he cast from the body of a dead criminal in about 1750. This statuette was made from a wax model commissioned by Hunter from the Anglo-Danish sculptor Michael Henry Spang which he exhibited at the Society of Arts in 1761 and was cast by the gem engraver Edward Burch.

William Hunter was the most significant anatomist in eighteenth-century London. From the 1750s Hunter was associated with the teaching of anatomy to artists and became the Royal Academy’s first professor of anatomy in 1768. Hunter’s first documented écorché was made for the Society of Arts. But the present lead cast seems likely to be the gem engraver Edward Burch. Martin Kemp suggests that Burch exhibited his bronze version at the Royal Academy in 1775 as two casts ‘from a wax model.’ Burch had a long-standing relationship with Hunter. In 1774 Hunter commissioned a medal portrait of himself from Burch. After Hunter’s death Burch noted in the introduction to his Catalogue of one hundred proofs from gems: ‘Gratitude will not permit me to suffer the friendship and benefit I have received from my late worthy friend, Dr Hunter, to pass unnoticed. It is to this gentleman I principally owe my practice of studying all my specimens anatomically.’

The finished models were hugely popular. Hunter was immensely proud of the sculpture and is shown holding a version in his portrait by Mason Chamberlin in the Royal Academy. Thomas Paine the younger recorded that he carried with him on his next morning we had the external muscles all well exposed ready for making a mould from him, the cast of which is now in the Royal Academy. The plaster cast remained at the Royal Academy for most of the eighteenth century and appears in Zoffany’s two paintings of the Academy. Hunter appreciated the importance of producing a reduced replica of the écorché figure for easier use by artists. He commissioned the Danish sculptor, Michael Henry Spang, to make a reduced wax model which was exhibited at the Society of Arts in 1761. The wax model survives in Hunter’s collection at Glasgow University. Spang died in 1767 and Hunter turned to other sculptors to cast bronzes from his model. Albert Paris was awarded a premium for a ‘Cast of an Anatomy Figure, after Spang’ in 1769 by the Society of Artists.
journey to Italy in 1768: ‘a little Anatomical figure in bronze, by Spang, from a model he made in wax…’, and he reported that it was ‘much admired at Paris, Rome etc. for its excellence, and portability’. George Romney made a number of studies from his bronze écorché and included it in a remarkable double-portrait at McMaster Museum of Art entitled: The Anatomy Lesson. Writing in 1811 Abraham Ross praised Dr Hunter’s écorché figure for ‘every attention’ having been paid ‘both by him and the artists who assisted in placing the figure in a graceful attitude’. Ross concluded by noting that: ‘Mr Spang, made a small model of this figure, the bronze casts of which, for their size are excellent.’ A number of examples survive in museum collections including the Hunterian in Glasgow, Victoria & Albert Museum, British Museum and the Yale Center for British Art (formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd).

This statuette was one of the most important and widely celebrated écorché models produced during the eighteenth century. Made under the supervision of Dr William Hunter, it is an important work in the evolution of art teaching in Britain. Our cast is by one of the leading gem-engravers and sculptors of late eighteenth-century, Edward Burch and is a particularly fine example being beautifully patinated and also executed in lead which although not as costly to produce as bronze is capable of taking much finer detail.

NOTES

7. The painting had traditionally been called Robert, 9th Baron Petre and his son, but Alex Kidson has argued that it is possibly an idealised self-portrait with his younger brother Peter. Alex Kidson, George Romney: A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings, New Haven and London, 2015, pp.888–90.

George Romney
Two studies of an écorché from a sketchbook
Pen on paper · each 6 5/8 x 3 7/8 inches · 167 x 99 mm
Lowell Libson and Jonny Verker Ltd.
This little known and previously unpublished painting is a fine example of Reynolds's mature portraiture. Preserved in remarkable condition the painting has remained in the family's possession since its completion. Recorded in Reynolds's Account Ledger for 1776, the portrait shows the sophisticated visual language Reynolds had developed to compose his depictions of patrician women, particularly of mothers with their children. The successful grouping of Elizabeth Rolleston caused the present painting to be engraved in the nineteenth century as ‘Maternal Love’. Elizabeth Rolleston and her son Samuel, are shown in a complex serpentine pose, almost certainly derived from an old master painting or print, a pose that Reynolds had first trialled in a grand full-length depiction of Elizabeth, Viscountess Melbourne which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1773.

The portrait was commissioned by Samuel Rolleston shortly after his marriage to Elizabeth Carr and birth of their first son, Samuel. Rolleston was the son of a successful London merchant and member of the Goldsmiths Company, Matthew Rolleston who had been elected a sheriff of the City of London in 1756. He had considerable property and commercial interests in Southampton and on the Isle of Wight, where Samuel owned a number of mills. In short, the Rollestons belonged to the burgeoning middle class whose wealth was derived from an old master painting or print, a pose that Reynolds had first trialled in a grand full-length depiction of Elizabeth, Viscountess Melbourne which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1773.

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By 1776 Reynolds had also established a systematic method of determining the attitudes chosen for portraits, keeping a portfolio of engravings after his own and other artists’ works from which sitters could choose and adapt poses. The portrait of Elizabeth Rolleston was based upon a successful pose Reynolds had used to depict Elizabeth, Viscountess Melbourne and her son Peniston Lamb in 1770. It is likely that Samuel Rolleston was shown the engraving of Lady Melbourne made by Thomas Watson which had been published on 10 February 1775, selecting it as an appropriate model for the portrait of his own wife and son. Reynolds was, at this date, experimenting with the relationship between mothers and children, producing a sequence of portraits of patrician sitters and their offspring arranged in complex poses. In the mid-1760s Reynolds had painted a portrait of Mrs Edward Lascelles and her daughter Frances in a pose derived from an engraving by Battista Franco of the Virgin and Child in a Landscape; the somewhat awkward arrangement showed the infant Frances Lascelles reaching athletically up to play with her mother’s hair. In a portrait of The Duchess of Marlborough with her daughter dated 1765, Reynolds showed Lady Caroline Spencer being held playfully at arms-length in a pose derived from a lunette on the Sistine Chapel. In 1770 Reynolds exhibited a portrait of Mrs Edward Bouverie, who is shown seated in profile holding her child, who is shown obliquely playing with his mother’s veil. The pose Reynolds adopts in his portrait of Elizabeth Rolleston is not a precise replication of that used in his portrait of Lady Melbourne; it is a further elaboration; the infant Samuel Rolleston is
depicted carefully held by his mother, with his right hand raised, playing with the plait of Elizabeth Rolleston’s hair. The portrait of Elizabeth Rolleston and her son is a hugely interesting question of precisely how many paintings Rolleston had commissioned. In September 1777 Reynolds wrote to the Liverpool merchant and collector, Daniel Dundy, ‘my prizes – for a head is thirty-five guineas – as far as the Kneesy seventh – and for a whole-length one hundred and fifty’. We would then expect the present portrait, a conventional ‘half-length’, to have cost only 70 guineas, rather than the 105 guineas Rolleston paid. The most likely explanation is that Rolleston in fact commissioned two portraits, the present picture and a reduced version, on ½ size portrait of 35 guineas. This is likely to be a painting that appeared at Sotherby’s, New York January 11, 1998 (lot 223) and is listed above as copy 1. When this reduced version of the portrait appeared at auction in 1996 it was identified as a depiction of Lady Anne Butler, later Lady Ormonde. Graves and Cronin recorded a portrait of Lady Anne Butler which had been exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1781 from the possession of the collector, Hugh Greville, 1st Duke of Westminster. This is in fact a further copy of the present painting that is now on loan to the Whitworth in Manchester and listed above as copy 2. The identification of the sitter as Anne Butler, Countess of Ormonde is problematic. Whilst Reynolds’s letters ‘books do not survive for 1775 or 1776, his letters are remarkably complete and there is no record of Anna’s husband, John Butler, later 17th Earl of Ormonde or her father, John Wandesford, 5th Viscount Castletown having made any payments. Whilst in the collection of the distinguished Whig politician and collector, Henry Labouchere, Lord Taunton, the painting was engraved by James Scott and published in 1865 with the title ‘Maternal Love’, a title which underlines the ambiguity of the sitter’s identification. The appearance of the drapery in the present portrait does require comment. In 1777 Reynolds seems to have been thirty-five years employing a particularly fugitive red lake pigment which he used to paint the costumes of Elizabeth Rolleston. This explains the apparently unfinished quality of the drawing, given that over time the red lake has become transparent thus exposing the under painting. A painting of the same date, Mrs Richard Creyts, now in the Dixons Art Gallery, Memphis shows the same effect. The bold, somewhat loosely formed figure of Elizabeth Rolleston is close to other three-quarter length portraits Reynolds executed at the same date. In 1777 Reynolds exhibited a portrait of Lady Elizabeth Herbert and her son at the Royal Academy, the composition shows the infant Charles Herbert reaching up to stroke his mother’s chin, in a pose that echoes that of Elizabeth Rolleston and her son. The loose, boldly drawn painting of the figure of Lady Elizabeth Herbert is close to that of Elizabeth Rolleston, equally the high level of finish in their faces and complex, fashionable hairdos, suggests that this was a norm of Reynolds’s practice at this date. The portrait of Elizabeth Rolleston and her son passed to Samuel Rolleston, who was to have an eventful career in Britain’s burgeoning Empire. Appointed to the East India Company’s civil service in Bombay in 1774, he returned to India the ship he was travelling on, the Ganges, sank off the Cape of Good Hope and he left an account now in the British Library. The portrait remained with descendants at Great Pan, Manor, Whippingham on the Isle of Wight, unknown to scholars, despite being exhibited in Birmingham in 1931. Boldly painted, beautifully preserved and showing Reynolds’s fascination with depictions of mothers and their children, this portrait is an important addition to Reynolds’s oeuvre. We are grateful to Martin Poule for his help in cataloguing this picture and for confirming the attribution to Joshua Reynolds.
Oil on canvas
50 x 40 inches; 1270 x 1016 mm
Painted 1776

COLLECTIONS
The sitter;
Mrs Joseph Ackland, by descent, by 1902;
Phillips, London, 11 December 1984, lot 14;
Christie’s, New York, 12 January 1998, lot 116;
Chawton House Library, Hampshire to 2018

LITERATURE
Michael Levey, Sir Thomas Lawrence, New Haven & London, 2005, pp.48, 112;
James Wyatt Cook and Barbara Collier Cook, Man-Midwife, Male Feminist: The Life and Times of George Macaulay MD (1716–1766), Ann Arbor, 2006, p.223;
Susan Storin, Joseph Wright, Bath and Beyond, exh. cat, Holburne Museum of Art, Bath, 2014, pp.36–40, 90, p.34;

EXHIBITED
Glasgow, Glasgow Art Gallery, Loan Collection of Pictures by French and British Artists of the 18th Century, 1962, cat. no.120;
Bath, Holburne Museum, and Derby, Derby Museum & Art Gallery, Joseph Wright, Bath and Beyond, 2016, cat.no.7.

ENGRAVED
By John and Charles Sherwin (after an intermediary drawing by Thomas Lawrence), published Nov 5 1782 by R. & C. Crutwell, Bath (of Thomas Wilson only).

Painted, as Joseph Wright of Derby wrote to his brother, ‘for reputation’, this three-quarter length portrait was the most important commission he undertook whilst living in Bath. Painted for the distinguished clergyman Dr Thomas Wilson, it depicts Wilson and his adopted daughter, Catherine Sophia, the daughter of the radical republican historian Catherine Macaulay. The widowed Macaulay, a celebrated historian and polemicist, was in the midst of writing her unprecedented eight volume History of England; whilst she is not included in the portrait, both sitters are shown pointing at a volume of the History of England. As such, this portrait stands as a monument to one of the most progressive female historians of the eighteenth century and her unconventional relationship with Wilson. The painting is also a tour de force of Wright’s mature work as a portraitist.

By 1776 Joseph Wright of Derby had achieved considerable success with his great candlelight paintings; he was recently returned from a period of study in Italy and had established himself in Bath, hopeful of forging a successful portrait practice. Thomas Gainsborough was demonstrating that the resort town of Bath continued to be a potentially fruitful place to operate as a portraitist. By 1778 Joseph Wright of Derby had achieved considerable success with his great candlelight paintings; he was recently returned from a period of study in Italy and had established himself in Bath, hopeful of forging a successful portrait practice. Thomas Gainsborough was demonstrating that the resort town of Bath continued to be a potentially fruitful place to operate as a portraitist. Despite arriving in November 1775, Wright had managed to attract few patrons, he was therefore excited by the commission he received from Thomas Wilson in April 1776.
Writing to his brother, Richard that: ‘I am now painting a half length of Dr Wilson & his adopted Daughter Miss Macauley, this is for reputation only, but you must not say so. The D.r is a very popular Man & is fight- ing in my Cause stoutly.’ Thomas Wilson was the rector of St Stephen Walbrook in the City of London. He was the son of the celebrated Bishop of Sodor and Man and was a considerable cultural figure and patron of the arts. The year Wright painted this portrait, Benjamin West had completed his large altarpiece of Devout Men taking the Body of St. Stephen (collection, Museum of Fine Art, Boston) commissioned by Wilson for the altar of St Stephen Walbrook. The large painting was shown at the Royal Academy in April where both the painting and Wilson received considerable praise.

Wilson was also rector of St Margaret’s Westminster but following the death of his wife in 1772, despite his ecclesiastic duties, he spent much of his time in Bath. Wilson owned 14 Alfred Street, next to the new upper Assembly Rooms, and here the widowed historian, Catherine Macaulay and her daughter came to live with him. The first volume of Macaulay’s History had been published in 1763, with subsequent volumes following in 1765, 1767, 1768, 1771, 1781 and 1783. Macaulay’s writing was initially celebrated as a timely answer to David Hume’s Tory interpretation of history. As the History proceeded, however, it became increasingly clear that Macaulay was a real radical. It was when she reached her fourth volume in 1776, that dealt with the trial and execution of Charles I, that her extreme views were revealed. It was in this volume that she talked for the first time of ‘the rise of the republicans’ who ‘looked forward to the reformation of the principles, as well as the executive, of the government.’ The Commonwealth she saw as ‘the brightest age that ever adorned the page of history’ It was in her sympathies for the Commonwealth, Macaulay expressed her support with the American colonists. In her History and her other writings she was a passionate advocate of liberty and democracy, believing that ‘it is only the democratical system, rightly balanced, which can secure the virtue, liberty and happiness of society’. Macaulay was celebrated by other radical writers and was a close friend of John Wilkes and his daughter Polly as well as the republican Thomas Hollis, who left his library to Harvard. Wilson was also described as being ‘zealous for liberty’, he too was a friend of John Wilkes, who he made a churchwarden of St Margaret’s Westminster and it was probably through Wilkes that Wilson first met Macaulay.

The widowed Macaulay and her daughter, Catherine Sophia, are recorded living with Wilson in Bath in the autumn of 1776. In April 1775 the childless Wilson had adopted the eleven-year-old Catherine Sophia making her his heir, at the same time he assigned the lease of his house in Bath to Catherine Macaulay and promised her an annuity for life. Their house became the centre of intellectual life in the spa town, Thomas Wilson wrote: ‘Our little Tusculum … which is honoured with all the visits of all the Literary persons who frequent this place.’

The double portrait of Wilson and Catherine Sophia was the most ambitious Wright had made since his return from the Continent. Conceived as a depiction of old age instructing youth, the portrait shows...
Wilson painting at an open page from Catherine Macaulay’s History, Catherine Sophia points to another passage on the same page and looks intently up at Wilson. The gestures of the sitter’s hands imply to the viewer, that they are having a conversation about Macaulay’s text; as such it is a remarkable depiction of female education in the eighteenth century.  

Wright seems to have drawn upon the rich tradition of portraits of statesmen and their secretaries, most notably Sebastiano del Piombo’s portrait of Ferry Corneille and his secretary which Wright would have known as a print from the Raccolto Crivelli. It was a portrait format adopted by Wright’s contemporaries, such as Joshua Reynolds, who used it as the basis for his portrait of Lord Buckingham and Edmund Burke begun in 1768. The essential dynamic is one of contrast. Wright places the youthful Catherine Sophia, dressed colourfully in a pink silk dress, wrapped in a blue shawl, fringed with silver, her hair adorned with pink feathers and a rope of pearls, in contrast to the elderly monochromatic Lord Rockingham and Edmund Burke assembled, Macaulay was seated in an antique costume, she leans on five gentlemen selected from the company. She was enthroned, she was regaled with celebration for Macaulay’s birthday in 1777. A ‘numinous and brilliant company’ assembled, Macaulay was seated in an elevated position (Philip Thicknesse claims she was enthroned), she was regaled with six specially-composed poems read by six gentlemen selected from the company. She was then presented by Wilson with a large gold medal which had originally been given by Queen Anne to one of the ambassadors at the Peace of Utrecht. The entertainment proceeded with wine and a lavish spread of ices, cakes and exotic fruits, lasting until two in the morning. Whilst the birthday celebrations were satisfied in the press they are, as Susan Sloman has suggested, a long way to explain the celebrity of Macaulay and Wilson in Bath at the moment Wright of Derby was producing his portrait. Wright’s statement to his brother that this portrait was painted for ‘reputation’ has led to the interpretation that it was not a commission, but painted for Wright’s exhibition room in Bath. Given the highly personal nature of the portrait, it seems more likely that Wilson retained the picture. It did not have the effect Wright had hoped for, his practice in Bath never took off and he returned to Derby in 1777. Wilson’s over the top veneration of Macaulay prompted the publication of a series of caricatures by Matthias and Mary Darly mocking both of them. Wilson reported to his daughter: ‘Darly has just published a new caricature of her and the Doctor, which she owns has wiser’d her to the heart. It is worth your buying.’ Shortly after Wright’s painting was completed Catherine Macaulay married for a second time, a young Scotsman, William Graham, who was mate to a ship’s surgeon. Wilson was dismayed. Macaulay refused to return the deeds to Wilson’s house or renounce her annuity and Wilson eventually resorted to blackmail to win them back. Wilson complained that ‘the NewsPapers have been very free with my character.’ Wright tried to improve his reputation by engaging a young scholar to edit and publish the devotional writings of his father, Bishop Thomas Wilson. Published in 1778, The Diaries of Thomas Wilson, D.D. 1731–37 and 1750, son of Bishop Wilson of Sodor and Man, London, 1962, p.116. Sloman, Pickpocketing the Rich: Portrait Painting in England 1740–1840, London, 2002, p.21. Wright seems to have drawn upon the rich tradition of portraits of statesmen and their secretaries, most notably Sebastiano del Piombo’s portrait of Ferry Corneille and his secretary which Wright would have known as a print from the Raccolto Crivelli. It was a portrait format adopted by Wright’s contemporaries, such as Joshua Reynolds, who used it as the basis for his portrait of Lord Buckingham and Edmund Burke begun in 1768. 

Robert Edge Pine

Oil on canvas, c.1779
54.1 x 45.7 inches · 1372 mm · 1160 mm
@ National Portrait Gallery, London

Matthew Darly, A speedily and effectual preparation for the next world

Catching, published May 1777
Lewis Walpole Library, New

NOTES
7. A series of some thirty letters from Catherine Sophia Macaulay to her mother detailing her education survive in the collection of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, 61/197995.
This rapidly executed pencil study of a clump of trees was made by Gainsborough whilst he was still in his native Suffolk at the end of the 1750s. Gainsborough’s friend and obituarist, the Reverend Sir Henry Bate Dudley wrote in 1788 that: ‘Nature was his teacher and the woods of Suffolk his academy; here he would pass in solitude his moments in making a sketch of an antiquated tree, a marshy brook, a few cattle, a sheep herd and his flock, or any other accidental objects that were present.’

This drawing identical in size to a number of comparable sheets of the same period which are also focused ‘plein air’ studies and it was almost certainly part of a now dismembered sketchbook. According to Joseph Farington a group of sketchbooks were sold by the artist’s daughter Margaret in 1799 for £140.3s.6d. 2 Of the ten books offered for sale at Christie’s, three were acquired by the West India merchant and collector George Hibbert, one by the collector and connoisseur Richard Payne Knight, one bought in half-shares by Hibbert and Sir George Beaumont, one was acquired by the dealers Colnaghi’s and ‘Mr Pugh’, the artist Hugh Pugh, also bought three. 3 The present sheet comes from one of the Hibbert sketchbooks.

The purpose of such studies was clearly to inform Gainsborough’s own practice as a landscape painter. The close observation of clumps of tree allowed him to understand the construction of the plant, the massing of lights and shadows and the way the foliage behaved in different weather and seasons. Gainsborough was clearly working out a method of hatching which could suggest the characteristics of the tree without drawing every leaf, a method which was informed at this date by his interest in Dutch landscape painting of the seventeenth century. In another sheet, of precisely the same format, Gainsborough records a similar contrast in the form between two trees – the near tree shows strong light touching the left hand side of the tree and on the other side Gainsborough uses thick black chalk to show the foliage. 4 These sheets ultimately informed Gainsborough’s practice as a landscape painter, but rather than providing templates from which he could quote in his paintings, they acted as exercises, allowing him to work out a method of drawing individual trees back in his studio. Gainsborough articulated the idea that these studies acted as exercises rather than formal drawings in a letter to his patron, Constantine Phipps, who he was teaching to draw:

You know, Sir, I set you to this [sketch of foliage] merely to free your hand, but you are not to understand that for Drawing – therefore remember that there must be truth of hand, as well as freedom of hand in Drawing. 5

Notes
1. The Morning Herald, 8 August, 1788.
In the autumn of 1770 Thomas Jones recorded in his Memoirs a trip to Gadbridge, Buckinghamshire, the home of his cousin Rice James ‘made a number of Sketches from the little picturesque Bits round about, as far as St Alban’s, and painted in Oil some Studies of Trees &c after nature.’ This is the most substantive reference in Jones’s own writing to his technique of producing studies from nature on primed paper small enough to fit into the lid of a painting box. The present work, signed and dated 1776, is precisely such a study made whilst staying at his parent’s home, Pencerrig, on the eve of his departure for Italy. Successful during his own lifetime, but largely forgotten after his death, he has received a great deal of attention in recent years as a result of these powerful plein air studies.

Born at Penkerrig to an established family of dissenters, Jones was originally intended for a career in the church, but decided instead to pursue a life of landscape painting. From November 1761 Jones spent a year in William Shipley’s London drawing school, where he became a firm friend of John Hamilton Mortimer, his frequent collaborator as well as companion on high-spirited excursions. Convinced that his ‘natural bias’ was towards landscape painting, in March 1763 he persuaded Richard Wilson to take him as a pupil for two years. His journal includes a glimpse of Wilson rebuking Jones and his fellow pupils William Hodges and Joseph Farington for rowdiness: ‘Gentlemen, this is not the way to rival Claude.’ Jones was a prolific exhibitor at the Society of Artists, sending some fifty works between 1761 and 1786. Some were specific views in England and Wales;
others are less identifiable, such as the Vue after Nature singled out by Horace Walpole in 1770 as a ‘very fine picture’.

Jones’s exhibited landscapes were principally conventional ‘exhibition’ works; either topographical subjects or historical landscapes, such as his Bard of 1774, the subject-matter taken from the poem by Thomas Gray, which was shown at the Society of Artists that year and turned into a mezzotint by John Raphael Smith and published by John Boydell in 1775. Jones’s most significant innovation was technical, developing a habit of painting small oil sketches on paper outdoors. These landscape excursions were by no means unique – we know Jones’s master, Richard Wilson executed oils en plein air in Italy in the 1750s – but no painter had made it such an integral aspect of their working practice.

Jones returned to Pencerrig in September 1775, on the eve of his departure for Italy, and made ‘a number of Studies in Oil on thick primed paper—after Nature’ of which the present is a particularly fine example. Jones executed a number of highly personal studies of the environs around Pencerrig, as well as on the nearby River Wye. It is perhaps no coincidence that Jones’s native landscape was the landscape made famous by the second generation of writers on the picturesque. The present lively oil tallies with Benjamin Malkin’s lyrical description of the river scenery at Aberedw, one of the most spectacular stretches of the Wye. Malkin’s assertion that Jones himself had made the ‘romantic scenery’ at this spot the focus of his ‘early studies’ is confirmed by his autobiographical poem ‘Petraeia’ which dedicates a stanza to the pictorial delights of ‘Vaga’ – the Wye. Jones may have generally resisted the attractions of continental sublime scenery – and the mountains of North Wales – but the ‘Alpine majesty’ of the Wye proved a fruitful exception.

Dated clearly on the rock in the foreground the status of Jones’s oil on paper studies remains unclear. The present study was probably painted in one sitting, out of doors, as indicated by the amount of ground which has been allowed to show through. Whether the present painting was designed for sale or as private study is unclear. The fact that he neither lists nor describes them in his Memoirs, suggests ultimately that they were intensely personal works and as has been observed, they would hardly have been deemed ‘pictures’ by his contemporaries. As is the case with a number of these intense studies of the period, the present work is made on two joined sheets. The present sketch is one of the most successful compositions he executed during his 1765/6 Welsh period and in its compositional structure and technical fluency presages his great Italian landscapes.

Notes

Clear Vaga, whose meandering floods Embrace fair Lechria’s fields and woods, Here gently gliding o’er the plain, There foaming like the angry main; Rushing through rock with horrid sweep, Or whirling down the giddy deep.
A COW AND SHEEP IN A CLEARING

Black chalk heightened with white on buff paper
9 ½ x 13 5/8 inches; 241 x 346 mm
Drawn in the late 1770s

COLLECTIONS
Sir Arthur Kay, 1930;
Kay sale, Christie’s, 23 May 1930, lot 37 (22 gns. to Meatyard);
Sir Michael Sadler, d.1943;
Leicester Galleries;
Sir Kenneth (later Lord) Clark, d.1983;
The Hon Mrs Alan Clark (daughter-in-law of the above), by gift;
The Saltwood Heritage Foundation, sale Christie’s, 25 April 1995, lot 4;
Miss Dorothy Scharf, acquired from the above;
Private collection, USA, acquired from the above 2009, to 2017

LITERATURE
Mary Wrose Hal, Gainsborough’s Landscape Drawings, 1939, p.126, cat no.284;

EXHIBITED
York, Bristol, Liverpool etc., Arts Council of Great Britain exhibition, Gainsborough’s Drawings, 1960–61, no.73;

This powerful drawing was made by Gainsborough at the end of the 1770s; unlike most of his mature drawings, the landscape element is minimal and there are no human figures. Gainsborough instead depicts a single cow shown in profile, accompanied by a sheep. Rapidly and boldly handled, this grand drawing is one of Gainsborough’s most impressive animal portraits and points to the complexity and sophistication of his work as a draughtsman.

Amongst Gainsborough’s earliest landscape drawings are a number of careful graphite studies of cows. Two varnished sheets in the Oppé Collection at the Tate show seated cows set within landscapes and have traditionally dated to the late 1750s; as Annie Lyles has noted: ‘such subjects are generally observed from a close viewpoint, and almost certainly drawn from nature.’ Made whilst Gainsborough was living in Suffolk, the meticulous studies have a specificity that confirms that they were made from life. By the 1770s Gainsborough was no longer concerned with drawing directly from nature; instead he had developed a sophisticated vocabulary of natural forms which he used to compose landscapes of the imagination. These famous ‘thoughts, for landscapes scenery’ were derived from the tabletop models vividly described by the writer and painter William Pyne as consisting of ‘cork or coal for his foregrounds, make middle grounds of sand and clay, bushes of mosses and lichens, and set up distant woods of broccoli.’

In the present drawing a pollarded willow frames the composition on the left and to the right a rock, perhaps a piece of coal, concludes the right hand side of the drawing. A thicket with an angled branch provides a dark background, a drama of diagonals, which is used to set off the prominent horizontals and verticals of the cow and the concentration of light helps to emphasise the stillness of the scene.

The technique used by Gainsborough in drawings like this was described by Edward Edwards as: ‘A process rather captious, truly deserving the epithet bestowed upon...’
them by a witty lady, who called them moppings.’ Here Gainsborough has used black chalk heightened with white, working in his characteristic rapid and loose manner. Gainsborough was perpetually conscious of media, writing to correspondents about the availability of different types of paper, being particularly disappointed when the printer James Dodsley could not supply a fine wove paper which Gainsborough had been keen to use ‘for making wash’d Drawings upon.’

In the present drawing Gainsborough has used buff coloured paper which imparted a mid-tone like the ground of a canvas, on which Gainsborough has used the black chalk to create his forms and white chalk to provide light and colour.

The evidence suggests that the gestation of Gainsborough’s later landscape drawings were more complex and sophisticated than the mere illustration of diorama. Gainsborough must have been armed with his earlier Suffolk studies, such as the Oppé drawings of cows, which provided him with accurate observations from nature. These allowed him to produce countless spontaneous compositions that were both technically and pictorially innovative. Many of Gainsborough’s surviving drawings from this period all feature a similar group of components, rearranged to form new compositions. To achieve these ‘free sketches’ Gainsborough developed a visual shorthand, particularly in his handling of trees, figures and cattle; the latter often appearing in an almost abstract reduction of shapes and lines. Looking at the large body of Gainsborough’s drawings it is clear that principal amongst the motifs he deployed in these imaginary compositions were cattle. Gainsborough shows cattle watering, grazing, being milked and herded, cattle quietly traverse his landscapes and sit ruminant on outcrops. But this sheet is unusual in showing a cow close-to, in profile. Clearly not drawn from life, Gainsborough’s incisive lines show the memory of a cow rather than an actual animal, whilst the grouping of cow and sheep point to his awareness of existing visual traditions.

Gainsborough had a life-long passion for seventeenth-century Dutch art. Recent research has shown that he owned a substantial collection of Dutch old master engravings which informed his work; for example in an upright landscape of the 1750s, Gainsborough quoted directly a group of four sheep and goats which came from an etching of 1655 by Carol Dujardin. Gainsborough owned unspecified engravings by Paulus Potter, which may have been one of the series of prints by Marcus de Rye made after Potter’s drawings of cows in the 1660s. The present drawing is close in spirit to Potter’s individualistic cows set in distinct landscapes and may well have formed Gainsborough’s source.

NOTES
This engaging picture is a rare and important documented example of a servant portrait made by Joseph Wright of Derby in around 1780. The sitter has long been identified, on the basis of an entry in Wright's own account book, as 'Old John at the King's Head' and the circumstance of the commission explained by Wright's further entry: 'Raffled for & paid.' The sitter was the head waiter at Derby's principal Coaching Inn, the King's Head and the portrait was painted to provide a pension for 'Old John' himself.

We know the raffle was won by another of Wright's patrons, the 
Mr Daniel Parker Coke. Despite being long regarded as one of Wright's most sensitive and penetrating portraits, it has been the subject of surprisingly little discussion; this note identifies the sitter for the first time and locates this unusual image in the complex context of servant portraiture and artistic charity during the eighteenth century.

By 1780 Joseph Wright was a celebrated figure in Derby, having achieved considerable success in London's exhibiting societies, travelled to Italy and published engravings which had achieved international success. In 1777 he had returned from Bath permanently to live in Derby and service a local, loyal clientele; men growing prosperous as a result of burgeoning industry and commerce. Derby itself was
The painting was done by Wright as a servant. According to the details he recorded, Tomson was born in 1683 and employed at St. Aunton Harold by the 1st and 2nd Earls Ferrers followed by the diplomat Sir Robert Sutton before being employed at the King’s Head in around 1737.

Curwen offers an unusually detailed account of John Tonson and his career as a servant. According to the details he recorded, Tonson was born in 1683 and employed at St. Aunton Harold by the 1st and 2nd Earls Ferrers followed by the diplomat Sir Robert Sutton before being employed at the King’s Head in around 1737.

Curwen’s description of Tomson appears to be remarkably close to Wright’s portrait. Wright shows the slight stoop, the ‘rubicon complex and remarkably unlined face’, he also offers a penetrating psychological portrait, capturing the intelligence and humour (‘the honest unaffected simplicity’) that had charmed Curwen. Wright has placed Tomson in a feigned, painted oval, setting the figure slightly off-centre this gives the sense of Tomson in action, the busy waiter at work, rather than the more usual static portrait format. Wright has evidently been scrutinising the elderly, characterful head with its piercing blue eyes and shaggy eyebrows. Wright, in common with other painters of the period, had already shown himself particularly attracted in depicting characterful heads of old men. As early as 1756 he had employed John Wilson, an occupant of one of Derby’s almshouses, as a model in his Three Housewives Wearing the Gladrut of Candlelight. In the 1770s Wright employed John Staveley as a model, making a series of vivacious life studies which he used to complete notable compositions such as The Captive now in Derby. Elderly models of lesser social standing than the painter, such as the street-mender George White, who was employed by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Tomson, allowed a painter to produce works of more power and significance than in commissioned portraiture, where the demands of the sitter, to an extent, took precedence.

The circumstances of the commission are not entirely clear. Wright’s Account Book contains the note ‘Head Raffled for it paid 12.12’, suggesting that Wright was paid the going rate for the portrait but that it had been initiated as the prize of a raffle. Wright’s early biographer William Bemrose stated that the portraits known to have been exhibited at the Town Hall may have been initiated as the prize of a raffle. Wright’s Account Book contains the note ‘Head Raffled for it paid 12.12’, suggesting that Wright was paid the going rate for the portrait but that it had been initiated as the prize of a raffle. Wright’s early biographer William Bemrose stated that the portraits known to have been exhibited at the Town Hall may have been initiated as the prize of a raffle.

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Charlotte Gunning

Saturday 15th May 1783

Oil on canvas
30 x 25 inches · 762 x 17 (unsold); 6th Bt. By descent; Sir Frederick Digby Gunning (1853–1906), Sir Robert Gunning (1731–1816), 1st Bt., father of the sitter; of the Gunning family, beginning with a splendid full-length depiction of her father, the successful diplomat, Sir Robert Gunning in the robes of the Order of the Bath. In 1781 Romney painted a portrait of Charlotte’s younger sister, Barbara and in 1786 her brother, George. The present painting was completed by August 1786 when Sir Robert paid Romney 20 guineas for the picture. Charlotte Gunning’s life encapsulated the evolving role of women at court in the second half of the eighteenth century. She had been appointed a Maid of Honour to Queen Charlotte in 1779. There were six Maids of Honour at any one time, they were paid £300 a year and provided with servants, but their lives consisted of little more than refined servitude. Gunning would have been compelled to work long hours, to attend her royal mistress through uneventful days and nights and to live a life of dull routine, menial activity, and rigid protocol. It was a life meticulously documented in her diary by the second keeper of the robes, the celebrated novelist Fanny Burney. Charlotte Gunning was a charming and sympathetic widower, had, she believed been paying court to her, not Charlotte. At first she dismisses the gossip, explaining that Digby’s “leading trait is the well-documented sober character. This bust-length portrait forms part of a series Romney completed of members of the Gunning family, beginning with a splendid full-length depiction of her father, the successful diplomat, Sir Robert Gunning in the robes of the Order of the Bath. In 1781 Romney painted a portrait of Charlotte’s younger sister, Barbara and in 1786 her brother, George. The present painting was completed by August 1786 when Sir Robert paid Romney 20 guineas for the picture. Charlotte Gunning’s life encapsulated the evolving role of women at court in the second half of the eighteenth century. She had been appointed a Maid of Honour to Queen Charlotte in 1779. There were six Maids of Honour at any one time, they were paid £300 a year and provided with servants, but their lives consisted of little more than refined servitude. Gunning would have been compelled to work long hours, to attend her royal mistress through uneventful days and nights and to live a life of dull routine, menial activity, and rigid protocol. It was a life meticulously documented in her diary by the second keeper of the robes, the celebrated novelist Fanny Burney. Charlotte Gunning was a charming and sympathetic widower, had, she believed been paying court to her, not Charlotte. At first she dismisses the gossip, explaining that Digby’s “leading trait is the


London, Agnew’s, Eleventh Annual Exhibition on behalf of the Artists’ General Benevolent Fund, 1905, no.20. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Museum of Art, The Stotesbury Collection, 1932 (no cat. number); San Francisco, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, Masterpieces of English Portraiture, 1945, no.37. London, Leger Galleries, Realism through Informality, 1983, no.16. This striking, Romantic portrait of Charlotte Gunning was painted by Romney in 1784 when she was serving as a Maid of Honour to Queen Charlotte. Almost monochrome in palette, the portrait is an unusually sombre depiction of a woman in her mid-twenties; Romney was perhaps responding to the remarkably well-educated sitter and her

LITERATURE


The Stotesbury Collection, auctioned in Christie’s, New York, 19 January 1996, lot 420; Private collection, acquired from the above; Philadelphia, acquired from the above, to 1941; Sir Frederick Digby Gunning (1853–1906), Sir Robert Gunning (1731–1816), 1st Bt., father of the sitter; of the Gunning family, beginning with a splendid full-length depiction of her father, the successful diplomat, Sir Robert Gunning in the robes of the Order of the Bath. In 1781 Romney painted a portrait of Charlotte’s younger sister, Barbara and in 1786 her brother, George. The present painting was completed by August 1786 when Sir Robert paid Romney 20 guineas for the picture. Charlotte Gunning’s life encapsulated the evolving role of women at court in the second half of the eighteenth century. She had been appointed a Maid of Honour to Queen Charlotte in 1779. There were six Maids of Honour at any one time, they were paid £300 a year and provided with servants, but their lives consisted of little more than refined servitude. Gunning would have been compelled to work long hours, to attend her royal mistress through uneventful days and nights and to live a life of dull routine, menial activity, and rigid protocol. It was a life meticulously documented in her diary by the second keeper of the robes, the celebrated novelist Fanny Burney. Charlotte Gunning appears in Burney’s diary – in its published form as ‘Miss Fuzilier’ – in somewhat unfavourable light, thanks to an episode which underscores the claustrophobic world of royal service. In 1790 Burney reacts with horror at the news that Queen Charlotte’s Vice Chamberlain, Colonel Stephen Digby, is to marry Charlotte Gunning. Digby, a charming and sympathetic widower, had, she believed been paying court to her, not Charlotte. At first she dismisses the gossip, explaining that Digby’s ‘leading trait is the monochrome in palette, the portrait is an unusually sombre depiction of a woman in her mid-twenties; Romney was perhaps responding to the remarkably well-educated sitter and her

GEORGE ROMNEY 1734–1802

Walk’d through the Green Park after Breakfast to Miss Gunning at St. James’s found her pretty well … it was her morning for having ye Royal Coach she carried me as far as Lady Clavering to whom I wish’d to make a visit, she was out – I went on to Romney the Painters with Miss Gunning she was going to sit for her Picture.’

Diary of Elizabeth Hamilton, Saturday 15th May 1783

Oil on canvas
30 x 25 inches · 762 x 17 (unsold); 6th Bt. By descent; Thomas Agnew & Sons, London, May 1905; Diowan Bros, New York; Edward Stotesbury, Whitemarsh Hall, Philadelphia, acquired from the above, to 1941; James St. L. O’Toole Galleries, New York, Catalogue of the Paintings … of the late Edward T. Stotesbury, April 23-May 10 1941, lot 17 (unsold); Parke-Bernet, New York, 18 April 1944, lot 2; M. A. Linde, Mr and Mrs Kay Kimbell, acquired in 1950; Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas; Mr and Mrs Kay Kimbell, acquired in 1950; Kimbell Art Museum sale, Sotheby’s, New York, 20 April 1993, lot 21; Leger Galleries, London (purchased at the above); Private collection, acquired from the above; Christie’s, New York, 19 January 1996, lot 420; Chawton House Library, Allen, Hampshire, acquired at the above, to 2018.
most acute sensibility', but it proved to be accurate. Burney was not Digby's social equal and she had tragically mis-read his friendship. Disbelief turns to scorn, Burney raged in her diary: 'he has risked my whole Earthly peace, with a defiance of all mental integrity the most extraordinary to be imagined! He has committed a breach of all moral ties, with every semblance of every virtue.'

Through the diary Burney gives glimpses of Charlotte Gunning. Whilst the court was thick with gossip of a possible romance, she records a conversation with Mrs Ariana Egerton:

'She asked me a thousand questions of what I thought about Miss Gunning? She dislikes her so very much, she cannot bear to think of her becoming Mrs Digby. She has met with some marks of contempt from her in their official meetings at St James’s, that cannot be pardoned. Miss Gunning, indeed, seemed to be formerly, when I used to meet her in company, to have an uncertainty of disposition that made her like two persons; now haughty, silent, and supercilious – and then gentle, composed, and interesting. She is, however, very little liked, the worst being always what most spreads abroad.'

Shortly after the wedding Burney records the curious circumstances of the service itself, told to her by Dr Fisher, Bishop of Salisbury, who had officiated. It took place in Sir Robert Gunning’s house in London, in the drawing room where ‘workboxes, netting-cases’ and everything of that sort was spread about as on any common day. Shortly afterwards, Burney records an unexpected visit from Charlotte:

'There appeared – the bride herself! – and alone! She looked quite brilliant in smiles and spirits. I never saw a countenance so enlivened. I really believe she has long cherished a passionate regard for Mr. Fairly, and brightens now from its prosperity … immediately wishing her joy: she accepted it with a thousand dimples.'

We know that Charlotte sat for her portrait in Spring 1784 thanks to the diary kept by another Maid of Honour, Elizabeth Hamilton who recorded visiting Romney’s studio at 32 Cavendish Square in the royal coach on Saturday May 15th. Romney’s sitters’ books record a large number of appointments which now show that he completed the portrait of Barbara Gunning first, in 1780 before painting the present portrait in 1784 for Sir Robert Gunning. The portrait itself shows Charlotte with fashionably powdered hair partially covered by a white scarf, in the manner of a classical vestal, perhaps an allusion to her employment?

The portrait remained in the Gunning family until the beginning of the twentieth century, when the fashion for Romney’s work resulted in its sale, first to Agnew’s and then to Duveen who sold it to the great Philadelphia collector Edward Stotesbury. The portrait hung at Whittemarsh Hall, the Palladian mansion designed for Stotesbury by Horace Trumbauer. The picture was subsequently in the collection of Mr and Mrs Kay Kimbell and was deaccessioned along with a major portion of their British portraits by the Kimbell Art Museum in 1983.

NOTES
5. Quoted in Joyce Hemlow, The History of Familly Burney, Oxford, 1958, p.51. The diaries for 1780–1795, which contain the material relating to Charlotte Gunning’s marriage to Digby have yet to be published as part of the Clarendon edition.
THOMAS JONES 1742–1803

A VIEW ON THE VIA NOMENTANA

Oil and pencil on paper

Signed with initials and inscribed ‘TJ without the Porta Pia Roma’ which gives us a rough location of the view. In the meticulously written (and re-written) journal Jones kept of his time in Italy, he left a vivid account of what took him outside the Porta Pia.

During the last as well as the present and succeeding Months, I made many very agreeable excursions to a Villa near Sant’Agnese without the Porta Pia – This Villa was situated upon a gentle Ascent which commanded a view of the City of Rome on one hand, and the Campagna with the Appennine Mountains on the Other. Several other oil sketches by Jones survive made on these excursions, including two depicting a cavern, one of which is inscribed: ‘A cavern near Sant’Agnese without the Porta Pia’ and now in the National Museums & Galleries of Wales. Jones continued in his Memoir giving an account of the villa he frequented: ‘[It] belonged to Sig’r Martinelli, a Roman, of a good family, but rather reduced in Circumstances – He had originally a large extent of Vineyards about it, but had been obliged to dispose of the greater part to Baron the Banker who had built himself a handsome Country House in the Neighbourhood – With this Sig’r Martinelli, little Cousins the Landscape Painter lodged in Rome and as he was not well in health, when the Weather was favourable, resided at this Villa for the benefit of his health.’

Rapidly executed in oil on primed paper, showing a non-descript view on the outskirts of Rome, this landscape is one of the most powerfully moving plein air studies made by Jones during his Grand Tour. It was precisely the anonymity of the scene, an area of scrub and the rooflines of suburban villas in the Campagna, rather than one of the monuments of classical Rome, that makes this view so compelling. Jones’s concentrated, atmospheric oil studies such as this, have long been recognised as transformative in the evolution of European plein air landscape painting.

In the autumn of 1770 Thomas Jones recorded in his Memoir a trip to Castelbridge, Buckinghamshire, the home of his cousin Rice James: ‘made a number of Sketches from the little picturesque Bits round about, as far as St Albans, and painted in Oil some Studies of Trees etc after nature.’ This is the most substantive reference in Jones’s own writing to his technique of producing studies from nature on primed paper small enough to fit into the lid of a painting-box. This innovative technique became an important feature of his Continental work.

Indeed, whilst in Italy, Jones met a number of French, German and Scandinavian artists who were beginning to make use of the on-the-spot oil study, including Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes. Peter Galassi has noted that it was Jones and Valenciennes in their shared interest in painting outdoors which ‘marked the beginning of a continuous tradition, the importance of which continued throughout the nineteenth century.’ Jones’s studies, in particular his unusual views of Neapolitan rooftops, display a sensibility and immediacy which make them stand out. As Anna Ottani Cavina pointed out in the recent exhibition in the Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris: ‘C’est l’Angleterre qui expérimente la premièr e réactivité de ces peintres face au paysage italien, de Francis Towne à Thomas Jones et John Robert Cozens jamais aussi audacieux et inventifs qu’en présence de lieux quelconques, découverts au hasard de leurs voyages.’

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This oil was evidently painted out of doors in the Summer of 1778: pin holes are visible in the top corners, suggesting it was attached to the lid of Jones’s paint box or portable easel. The sheet is signed and inscribed on the verso ‘without the Porta Pia Roma’ which gives us a rough location of the view. In the meticulously written (and re-written) journal Jones kept of his time in Italy, he left a vivid account of what took him outside the Porta Pia.
Consular road which ran north-east out of Porta Pia, near the basilica of Sant’Agnese fuori le mura. Using Jones’s description we can work out the precise location. Francesco Barazzi was a significant financier who acted as banker to many significant Grand Tourists, including artists. A plan of his property was made at his death and corresponds to a plot of land delineated in the most detailed early map of the area Giovanni Francesco Falzacappa’s Carta topografica del suburbano di Roma which was published in 1810. The plan shows the villa complex was situated to the south east of Sant’Agnese, on an area of elevated land, the ‘gentle Ascent’ mentioned by Jones. It is clear from Falzacappa that even by 1810 no buildings had been constructed to obstruct a view both of Rome itself and across the campagna to the Castelli Romani in the east. Nothing of Vigna Martinelli survives today, the villa itself was located roughly on the site of the circonvallazione, or Roman ring-road, in the modern area of Pietralata.

Jones mentions John Robert Cozens was staying at the villa, to Cozens we can add the names of John ‘Warwick’ Smith and Francis Towne, both of whom produced drawings at Vigna Martinelli. In the present oil sketch, Jones seems not to show the villa itself, but a view looking due West from the villa towards the via Nomentana. Jones has included a sketched profile of the villa’s garden gate, but other than a solitary Cyprus tree and the backs of a number of other houses, the view is anonymous. This was the approach which characterises Jones’s most famous oil sketches, the depictions of the tops of buildings seen from the window of his lodgings in Naples. Jones has instead focused on the effects of sunset on the landscape, as such, this plein air study prefigures a generation of European Romantic landscape painters.

NOTES

6. For the John ‘Warwick’ Smith see Anne Lyles and Robin Hamlyn, British Watercolours from the Oppé Collection, Exh. cat., London (Tate Gallery), 1997, cat. no.53, p.138; the Towne is in the collection of the British Museum (Museum Number: Nn, 62, 102).
This elegant watercolour offers important evidence of the early nineteenth-century interest in Greek vase painting. Drawn by Adam Buck in 1813, the composition is a transcription of a design from an antique vase and shows Buck's characteristic neo-classical interpretation of an antique source. Born and trained in Dublin, Adam Buck practiced first as a miniaturist before moving to London in 1795, where he worked for a fashionable clientele, which included George, Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. His elegant and spare portrait drawings were in great demand and he was a prolific exhibitor at the Royal Academy between 1793 and 1833. As well as portraiture, Buck also produced a large number of fashion plates, decorative compositions of loosely allegorical subject-matter, such as Faith, Hope and Charity. His subsequent reputation has largely rested on the proliferation of these prints and their use as designs in fan and on transfer-printed porcelain.

But Buck was a committed and intelligent interpreter of ancient Greek forms. The seriousness with which he engaged with the antique led Anthony Pasquin to observe: 'He appears to study the antique more rigorously than any of our emerging artists and by that means he will imbibe a chastity of thinking, which may eventually lead him to the personification of apparent beauty.' In London he not only studied and collected the newly fashionable Greek vases, he also published a prospectus for a book on vase painting: Proposals for publishing by subscription 100 engravings from paintings on Greek vases which have never been published, drawn and etched by Adam Buck from private collections now in England. The publication was intended as a continuation of Sir William Hamilton’s Collection of Engravings from Ancient Vases (1791–7). Buck painted an ambitious self-portrait with his family in 1813, which is now in the Yale Center for British Art, including nine of the Greek vases he planned to engrave. One of the vases (seen on the left of the principal niche) is a pelike painted with a scene of the Expiation of Orestes, based, as Jenkins first established, on a vase published in 1802 by A. L. Millin in his Monuments-Antiques. The vase was recorded by Millin as being in the possession of ‘M. Le Chanoine Zuppi’ of Naples.

In the present watercolour Buck has taken the scene depicted by Millin and transposed it into a contemporary neo-classical composition. Orestes avenges the death of his father Agamemnon, by killing his mother Clytaemnestra and her lover Aegisthus. Orestes is pursued by the Erinyes for this deed. Driven mad, he takes refuge with the goddess Athena who intervenes to end Orestes’ persecution, as a result he dedicates an altar to Athena. In this watercolour, Buck shows Orestes seated before a standing sculpture of Athena.

NOTES

1. Anthony Pasquin, An Authentic History of the professors of painting, sculpture, and architecture who have practiced in Ireland … to which are added Memoirs of the royal academicians, 1796, p.42.
This impressive early drawing was made by Bartolomeo Pinelli at the beginning of his career and shows the influence of his early mentor, Felice Giani. Pinelli produced prints, drawings, oils and terra-cotta; he had been a pupil at the Accademia di San Luca and his earliest works, such as this, demonstrate an awareness of non-classical ideas that were practiced by an international group of artists in Rome. Pinelli became known for his series of caricature-like engravings called Costumi romanae, published in 1809, which illustrated views of the people of Rome and Naples. Working largely for the tourist market, Pinelli produced a series of publications.

Pinelli depicts the moment Minerva animates the first man, sculpted from clay by the titan Prometheus. It was a subject that was explored by a number of contemporary artists in Rome. At precisely the date Pinelli was working on this drawing, the great Danish sculpture Bertel Thorvaldsen was making designs for a roundel of the same subject, showing the same combination of elements: the seated, naked titan sculpting tool in hand admiring his creation, whilst standing Minerva animates the figure, an act symbolised by a butterfly. Felice Giani also produced a design of this subject, now in the Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, which shows the inherent drama of the creation myth. Pinelli’s design was made at a moment when the Prometheus myth was taking on new meaning. Prometheus increasingly became associated with human striving, particularly the quest for scientific knowledge. As the myths of antiquity became inflected with the emotional turmoil of romanticism, Prometheus began to embody the lone genius whose efforts to improve human existence could result in tragedy, an idea exemplified by Mary Shelley’s adoption of The Modern Prometheus as the subtitle for her 1818 novel Frankenstein. Pinelli’s work is more usually associated with watercolour genre scenes of Roman life, this richly inked early drawing shows his ability to capture the potential drama of neo-classicism at the beginning of the nineteenth century.
Jacques-Laurent Agasse 1767–1849

Black chalk, heightened in white, on paper with grey ground
Inscribed in black pen lower right: ‘Agasse, donné par Mlle. Agasse.’
7 x 6 ½ inches; 180 x 158 mm
Drawn 1803

COLLECTIONS
Jacques-Laurent Agasse;
Louise Étienne Agasse (1795–1852), sister of the above;
Madeleine Humbert;
Elisabeth Senn-Humbert;
Andréa Rieder-Picot;
Private collection, Switzerland to 2018

LITERATURE

EXHIBITED
London, Tate Gallery, Jean-Laurent Agasse 1767–1849, 1988, cat. no.99;

This is a preparatory drawing for *The Departure for the Hunt* made by Jacques-Laurent Agasse, the finished painting, now in the collection of the Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, Geneva was completed in 1803 whilst he was working in Britain. This elegant life study offers important evidence for Agasse’s working practice and the use he made of drawings in preparation for his finished works.

Agasse was born in Geneva, where he had his first training at the École du Calabri, the state-run drawing school. In 1786 Agasse moved to Paris where he entered the studio of Jacques-Louis David and anatomy, dissection, and osteology classes at the Musée d’Histoire Naturelle. Following the French Revolution, Agasse returned to Geneva, where he met George Pitt, later Lord Rivers, who encouraged him to visit Britain where there was a flourishing market for equestrian pictures.

Agasse moved to London in the autumn of 1800 where he intended to take advantage of the opportunities offered to him by the exhibiting societies and the active print market. Six months after his arrival he exhibited two paintings at the Royal Academy; the following year he exhibited a portrait of Goya, a black mare owned by the Prince of Wales’s racing manager, this led to a number of further portraits of thoroughbreds. In 1802 Agasse began a relationship with the engraver Charles Turner; together they published sporting prints, sold through a network of printmakers and by subscription.

The present lively drawing was made in preparation for an ambitious painting now in Geneva celebrating the sporting activities of one of Agasse’s patrons. Showing a mounted huntsman and drawn in black chalk on prepared, blue paper with touches of white chalk. In his *Manuscript Record Book* we know that Agasse was staying at the seat of his patron, Peniston Lamb, 1st Viscount Melbourne at Brocket Hall in Hertfordshire. The wealthy Melbourne was a wide-ranging and unusual collector of British art: he acquired two of Joseph Wright of Derby’s most celebrated nocturnal works, including the Academy by Lamplight and The Blacksmith’s Shop now at the Yale Center for British Art. Melbourne also commissioned a celebrated conversation-piece of himself with members of his wife’s family from George Stubbs, now in the National Gallery, London. This commission from Melbourne was evidently of some importance to Agasse as, along with the present drawing, another study for the other mounted huntsman survives, as well as an oil study of the hounds in the foreground. This drawing was included in the important Agasse exhibition held at the Tate Gallery, London and Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, Geneva in 1988–1989. It has remained in the Agasse family until our recent acquisition.
THE GENTLE SHEPHERD

If nature’s first impressions are to be in aught believed it is a gem of the first water. I got only one slight look of it but I saw nature so beautifully depicted that in spite of all I could do the tears burst from my eyes and the impression made by it is as powerful at this moment as it was then.'

Oil on panel, 11 ½ x 15 inches; 295 x 395 mm; Signed and dated 1823

Nicholas Tromans, David Wilkie: The Peasantry Painter, Edinburgh, 2007, pp.13, 225, 242–244 (reproduced pl.7);
To be included in Harmish Miles’s Catalogue raisonné of the works of David Wilkie, to be edited by Alex Ketton and published by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

EXHIBITION
Edinburgh, Royal Institution, 1824, no.51;
London, British Institution, 1824, no.33;
Manchester, Art Treasurers Exhibition, 1825, no.28;
Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1880, no.193;
London, Royal Academy, 1887, no.89;
Raleigh, North Carolina Museum of Art, Sir David Wilkie of Scotland, 1984, no.25;

ENGRAVED
By James Stewart in 1824, published in London in 1828;
J. A. Wright, 1847;
P. Lightfoot, 1848–50;
Lumb Stocks, 1852.

COPIES
[1] Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, studio of David Wilkie, oil on panel, 30.5 x 41.8cm;
[2] Aberdeen, Art Gallery & Museum, studio of David Wilkie, oil on panel, 31.1 x 40.8 cm;
[3] Location unknown, Thomas Sully (1783–1872), oil on canvas, 1842, 73.5 x 91.5cm.

This panel was painted by David Wilkie when he was at the height of his powers. Commissioned in 1823 by the retired diplomat Sir Robert Liston, the painting depicts a scene from Allan Ramsay’s pastoral verse comedy The Gentle Shepherd. Immensely popular in Wilkie’s own life-time, the painting was exhibited regularly throughout the nineteenth century and engraven on four separate occasions. Preserved in spectacular condition, this intensely worked, tender painting is one of the great achievements of Wilkie’s mature career.

Wilkie was born at Culms, in Fife, on 18 November 1785, the third son of the Reverend David Wilkie, the village minister, and his third wife, Isabella Lister. He was educated at local schools in Pitlessie, Kettle and Cupar until the age of fourteen. Ambitious to become a painter, he was sent in 1799 to the Trustees’ Academy in Edinburgh, where he studied at the separate Drawing Academy newly founded by the history painter John Graham, among his fellow students were Sir William Allan and John Burnet, later the successful engraver of his works. He sold his first genre scene, Pitlessie Fair, a portrait of a village teeming with incident, for twenty-five pounds, and after a few months he moved in 1805 to London, where he entered the Royal Academy Schools and attended Charles Bell’s lectures on anatomy. Wilkie achieved an immediate public and critical success in 1806 with his first exhibit at the Royal Academy, The Village Politicians. A painting designed to perfectly capture the metropolitan imagination and executed in a style that reflected the contemporary taste for highly finished Dutch cabinet pictures, the painting catapulted Wilkie to prominence.4
Wilkie was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1809 and became a full Academician in 1811. He rapidly achieved considerable commercial success, in 1815 his Distraining for Rent was acquired by the British Institution for 600 guineas. In 1822 Wilkie exhibited The Chelsea Pensioners Receiving the Gazette Extraordinary of Thursday June 22nd, 1815, Announcing the Battle of Waterloo! which had been commissioned by the Duke of Wellington for the substantial sum of 1,200 guineas. The painting caused a sensation at the Royal Academy, where a barrier had to be erected to protect it from the crush of people who came to see it. That painting was admired by amongst others Théodore Géricault, who saw the unfinished painting in Wilkie’s studio and Eugène Delacroix who visited the Academy with Richard Parkes Bonington. Géricault wrote of how useful it would be for French artists to see Wilkie’s work. He wrote to Horace Vernet about his visit to Wilkie’s studio where he saw both the unfinished Waterloo Dispatch and the smaller Newsmongers, noting: ‘he has varied all these characters with much feeling. I shall mention to you only the one figure that seemed the most perfect to me, and whose pose and expression bring tears to the eye, however one might resist. It is the wife of a soldier who, thinking only of her husband, scans the list of the dead with an unquiet, haggard eye … Your imagination will tell you what her distraught face expresses.’

In the wake of the success of The Waterloo Dispatch, Wilkie painted this small, intimate panel depicting an episode from Allan Ramsay’s The Gentle Shepherd. Wilkie had known Allan Ramsay’s poem since his youth; he owned a copy of the 1788 edition which had been illustrated by David Allan and contained the music for O’er Bogie. Wilkie executed an early drawing inspired by it and painted another scene from the poem, The Cottage Toilet, now in the Wallace Collection, London. In the present panel Wilkie illustrates a scene described in the opening stanzas of Ramsay’s poem. Patie, the eponymous Gentle Shepherd, and Roger, another shepherd, are found together. They are respectively in love with the cousins Peggy and Jenny. Roger confesses his dejection at having been spurned by Jenny, and speaks of a meeting between them:
When he began to tune his stock and horn, With a her face she shows a cauldrise scorn.

Last night I play’d, ye never heard sic spite; O’er Bogie was the spring, and her delyte;

He then walk’d about, John Constable told her cousin and asking her that it is an affected disdain, but neither the lover, nor Peggy, nor the colley discover aught of this but are all deploring her perversity by looks the most characteristic. The looks of disappointed affection in the face are exquisite. I have often wondered what became of that little picture, or how it was estimated, for there was never any thing of the kind made such an impression on me.

Wilkie depicts Roger seated playing O’er Bogie on his stock-and-horn, a traditional Scottish reed instrument. Jenny, Roger’s love, is depicted in the left shoulder of a traditional painting. Wilkie’s knowledge of Dutch and Flemish art were characteristic of an obsessively laborsome preparation. Miniature lay figures, large finished drawings, and oil sketches were used to establish groupings and lighting. He then walks about, John Constable told Constable and Thomas Farington in 1810, “looking for a person proper to be a model for his picture.”

To his finished painting demonstrates Wilkie’s developing sophistication in the lucidity of his figures and focus of his narrative and design, coupled with great emotional range. The painting was a commission from his kinsman, the successful retired diplomat Sir Robert Liston, at the moment that Wilkie was working on The Waterloo Dispatch. Wilkie wrote to Liston’s wife on 4 December 1821, “The picture Sir Robert has been so obliging as to assist me to paint (or here I still keep in mind.) There are some little customs by no means that might be taken up for this purpose. Of these one from the Gentle Shepherd of Allan Ramsay you must perhaps like, but this we can discuss.” He took a further two years to deliver the painting. Wilkie had painted Liston himself a decade earlier in a portrait now in 1821: The Gentle Shepherd, published in 1828. This painting was a commission from his kinsman, the successful retired diplomat Sir Robert Liston, at the moment that Wilkie was working on The Waterloo Dispatch. Wilkie wrote to Liston’s wife on 4 December 1821, “The picture Sir Robert has been so obliging as to assist me to paint (or here I still keep in mind.) There are some little customs by no means that might be taken up for this purpose. Of these one from the Gentle Shepherd of Allan Ramsay you might perhaps like, but this we can discuss.”

He took a further two years to deliver the painting. Wilkie had painted Liston himself a decade earlier in a portrait now in the National Galleries of Scotland. Liston had served as a career diplomat, perhaps most influentially in North America. In January 1796 Wilkie had been appointed British minister to the United States, only nineteen years after the ending of hostilities. Through his actions, the British government agreed that Britain would not intervene in west or south-west America. He acted skillfully as an intermediary between the Canadian and American governments in a dispute over the upper Mississippi valley, and did much to encourage the informal system whereby Royal Navy ships conveyed American merchantmen. He remained at Philadelphia until December 1800 when he and his wife set sail for portraits by Gilbert Stuart, now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Wilkie’s The Gentle Shepherd proved enormously popular. It was engraved on a number of occasions, impressions making their way to America where it was copied by Thomas Sully. Wilkie himself produced at least two studio variants of the composition. The present panel was exhibited at the Royal Institution in Edinburgh in 1824 and at the British Institution shortly after Wilkie’s death in 1832 and again at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857. The great Scottish novelist, poet and essayist James Hogg wrote an account of the painting in 1825, in which he echoes Géricault’s words of 1821. After stating that the picture is probably regarded as a ‘trifle’ by the artist, he observed: ‘Of nature’s first impressions are so in aptitude believed it is a gem of the first water. I got only one slight touch of it, but I saw nature so beautiful as depicted that in spite of all I could do the tears burst from my eyes and the impression made by it is as powerful at this moment as it was then. It is a scene from Allan Ramsay’s gentle shepherd in which the lover is meeting all his power to play his sweetheart’s favourite tune with proper effect while she is leaning on her cousin and asking her ‘if she has any guess what tune it is that which the poor fiddler is trying?’ I never saw any thing equal to it! There is a cost of disdain in every muscle of Jenny’s lovely rural form from the toe to the eyepath which is indescribable. And the best of it all is the look at the picture precees at once that it is an affected disdain, but neither the lover, nor Peggy, nor the colley discover aught of this but are all deploring her perversity by looks the most characteristic. The looks of disappointed affection in the face are exquisite. I have often wondered what became of that little picture, or how it was estimated, for there was never any thing of the kind made such an impression on me.”

NOTES
This engaging portrait was made by Benjamin Burnell, one of Sir Thomas Lawrence’s most accomplished pupils. Drawn in 1802 this highly finished drawing depicts a boy dressed in the distinctive uniform of Christ’s Hospital probably with his younger brother. Burnell entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1791 as an architectural student at the comparatively late age of 22 but changed to become a student of painting. The diarist Joseph Farington recorded in 1801 another of Lawrence’s pupils, the engraver Richard James Lane, complaining that Lawrence employed him to copy his portraits but failed to sufficiently remunerate him adding: ‘He had heard that Mr. L[awrence] served his former pupil Mr. Burnell in the same manner exactly, having employed him a year & a half & never paid him one farthing (all these were Lane’s words) till he was arrested. This was told Lane by Mr. Dobson a relation of his.’

Lane, it seems, was being hyperbolic and Burnell was never arrested for debt, but it suggests that Lawrence was a negligent teacher. Despite this, the present drawing shows that Burnell adopted and adapted Lawrence’s own approach to drawn portraits. The elegant composition has been carefully worked in black chalk with only the faces and hands being rendered in coloured chalks. Although more densely worked than most of Lawrence’s portrait drawings, Burnell’s study retains something of the spare elegance for which Lawrence was particularly noted. Other examples by Burnell show him to have been a proficient exponent of this kind of portraiture; an engaging bust-length drawing of the great Regency art collector William Huskell-Carr signed and dated 1798 survives in the National Portrait Gallery, London. Burnell also had a successful and prolific career as a portraitist and history painter and is listed exhibiting regularly at the National Gallery from 1790 until his death in 1828.

NOTES
SIR DAVID WILKIE 1785–1841

GEORGE IV AT HOLYROOD HOUSE: A SKETCH

Oil on panel
12 3/4 x 9 inches; 324 x 229 mm
Falsely signed ‘D. Wilkie 1822’

COLLECTIONS
The artist’s sale, Christie’s, 30 Apr.1842, lot 603,
(‘George iv at Holyrood’ £2/18/ to ‘W’);
Thomas Wilkie, the artist’s brother, acquired at the above sale;
Anonymous sale, Sotheby’s, 10 November 1993,
lot 166 (withdrawn);
Richard Fagan, 1993, to 2018

LITERATURE
To be included in Hamish Miller’s Catalogue raisonné of the works of David Wilkie, to be edited by Alex Kirdon and published by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

This fluid oil sketch was made by David Wilkie in preparation for one of his most ambitious works The Entrance of George iv at Holyrood House commissioned by the monarch to celebrate his visit to Edinburgh in 1822, the first time a reigning British monarch had visited Scotland since Charles I. The present rapid oil sketch was made to show the King during the gestation of the composition.

George iv’s visit to Edinburgh in the summer of August 1822 was seen as an important opportunity to both celebrate burgeoning Scottish national identity and British unity. Lavishly – if rather ridiculously – choreographed by Sir Walter Scott, the royal visit offered a picturesque opportunity for painters to celebrate the new King’s reign. David Wilkie was present in Edinburgh and wrote a very account to his sister:

‘When it was known that the King was on the eve of landing, everybody ran to his station, and I hastened to mine, namely, Holyrood House – I saw the King alight; he had not much colour, but upon the whole was looking well. He was dressed in a field marshall’s uniform, with a green ribbon of the order of the Thistle.’

Wilkie adds that: ‘Collins saw the landing to great advantage, and, to our surprise, who should start up upon the occasion to see the same occurrence, but J.M. W. Turner, Esq. a. a. a. a. who is now with us we cannot tell how. Turner, like Wilkie, hoped to procure a commission from George iv, planning a cycle of nineteen paintings commemorating the event.’ In 1823 Wilkie was informed by the home secretary, Sir Robert Peel, that the King had chosen him to succeed Raeburn as the King’s Limner in Scotland. At the same moment he began his painting of the royal visit for the King, planning a composition on an epic scale: the final painting was to be over 6 feet long. The scene he chose was a fanciful variation on the episode he had described to his sister: George iv arriving at Holyrood, resplendent in his field marshall’s uniform and wearing the Order of the Thistle surrounded by a cast of characters some real but many invented or borrowed from Rubens.

The painting had a complex gestation. On 27 August 1823 Wilkie showed King George iv an unidentified sketch of the composition and wrote the following day: ‘The figure of the King in the sketch he did not approve of, but as I had made various in oil to show, one was fixed upon … as being in attitude and figure very near the mark.’

Robert Peel wrote of these alternatives on 29 August that Wilkie: ‘has quite failed in his likeness of the King … He has made three different sketches in different attitudes but his conception of the King’s person and manner is not at all a correct one.’ Despite
Peel’s disparaging comments, the present panel may, in fact, be one of those sketches ‘in oil’ that Wilkie presented to George IV. A central difficulty in the resolution of the composition lay in finding the right posture for the King. In the present sketch Wilkie has given the stout monarch an air of martial authority, the parted legs giving a sense of stately movement. This was the configuration finally settled upon. Where this study differs from the final composition is in the arrangement of the arms; here his left is akimbo, his hand touching his sword-belt; in the final composition the King raises his hat in his outstretched right hand and his left-hand rests by his side. That this sketch was made when the composition was already fairly advanced is suggested by the inclusion of the rapid swirls of paint at the King’s feet, which can be identified as a small dog when read in conjunction with the finished painting. Wilkie has used all his skills as a technician in oil to invest the figure of the king with suitable swagger, the rich glazing of the cloak, careful modelling of the lights and bravura details of the feathered hat, highly polished boots and gilt trim of the uniform all offset the careful and characterful portrait of the King himself. It therefore seems highly likely that this was the flattering oil study Wilkie had approved by George IV before completing the royal commission. The sketch remained with Wilkie being recorded in his posthumous sale, where it was acquired by his brother, Thomas Wilkie.

NOTES
1. Allan Cunningham, The Life of Sir David Wilkie; with his journals, tours and critical remarks on works of art; and a selection from his correspondence, London, 1843, vol. ii, p.84.
2. Turner did paint two sketches for his proposed scheme, interestingly both on mahogany panels, a medium favoured by Wilkie. For Turner’s project see Gerald E. Finley, Turner and George the Fourth in Edinburgh 1822, London, 1981.

David Wilkie, The Entrance of George IV at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, 1828
Oil on panel · 27½ x 36 inches · 70 x 91 cm · National Galleries of Scotland
This large sheet comes from a sketchbook Constable was using in the autumn of 1827 whilst staying with his siblings by the Stour at Flatford Mill. Constable’s brief, twelve-day holiday with his brothers, Abram and Golding Constable, was unusually productive. Graham Reynolds identified twenty-seven drawings, on twenty-six sheets, from this sketchbook the majority of which are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Constable travelled into Suffolk with his two small children – John Charles and Maria Louisa – leaving his ailing wife at home in Hampstead. From Constable’s correspondence it is evident that they spent much of their time outdoors, enjoying the unseasonably warm weather.

This drawing is singular in Constable’s oeuvre, showing a lone sportsman shooting duck on the Stour. Drawings from the 1827 sketchbook, are notable for Constable’s unusual breadth of approach; in the present drawing, Constable composes a grand landscape in miniature carefully filled with narrative: the sportsman in his cover, the dog holding a recently shot bird and in the distance a series of duck on the Stour, all illuminated by the rising sun. Constable probably had in his mind Peter Paul Rubens’s landscape of Het Steen in the Early Morning now in the National Gallery, which belonged to his great friend and patron, Sir George Beaumont.

Constable’s return to Flatford in 1827 was an opportunity, as he explained to his wife, to introduce the fourth generation of Constables to their friends and neighbours in his native Suffolk. Constable’s younger brother, Abram, had taken over the family Corn business following their father’s death in 1817; running it for the benefit of his siblings. Constable’s elder brother, Golding, had recently acquired a ‘little farm house … situate opposite the Windmill’ and was employed by the Countess of Dysart to manage part of her estate at Helmingham. Golding’s stewardship included presiding over shooting on the Dysart land and he was himself a noted shot. He is almost certainly Golding who is shown in this drawing. The Constables were a wealthy, landed rural family and the trip to Flatford undoubtedly presented Constable with an opportunity to introduce his city-born children to country sports. Constable mentions that he and the children spent much time fishing on the Stour: ‘John … is crazy about fishing – he caught 6 yesterday and 10 to day, some of which we are going to have for dinner’.

At least two sheets from the 1827 sketchbook show John Charles and Maria Louisa fishing from Suffolk barges on the Stour. Constable was himself a keen fisherman and it offered him important access to landscape, access that inflected and influenced his own compositions. In a famous letter to his friend and patron John Fisher written in October 1821, Constable writes a richly descriptive passage:

’How much I can imagine myself with you on your fishing excursions in the new forest, what River can it be. But the sound of water escaping from Mill dams, old willows, Old rotten Banks, slimy posts, the bracken. I love such things … so long as I paint I shall never cease to paint such places.’

The present sheet perfectly captures Constable’s sensory pleasure of being in the landscape: the rustling reeds as the huntsman’s positions, the ‘slimy posts’ in the centre of the sheet which are lovingly described, the alert gun dog and the splendour of the Stour.
rising sun over the Stour. It is in studies such as this that Charles Rhyne recognized that Constable was attempting more than just the optical experience the countryside provided; that the chronological development of his technique ‘was a response to his desire to convey his full experience’ of the localities he knew so intimately, ‘that he sought progressively to find equivalents in paint for not only the visual appearance, but also the touch even the sounds and smells of his native landscape, the full sensory experience of place.’

But the present drawing also demonstrates Constable’s profound interest in earlier landscape paintings. The scene must have recalled to Constable Ruben’s great landscape of Het Steen, which had been acquired by Sir George Beaumont in 1802. The general arrangement of the subject, with the hunter crouched in the undergrowth and central axis of the composition dominated by broken posts, with an open landscape stretching to the right bathed in the early morning sun, is close to Ruben’s design.

The 1827 sketchbook seems to have remained intact whilst in Constable’s studio before passing to his children Isobel Constable and Charles Golding Constable; at least one sheet is recorded in the sale of his collection at Christie’s in 1887. The 11 sheets now in the Victoria and Albert Museum were all bequeathed by Isobel Constable. Four sheets passed to Mrs Edward Fisher, now in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter. The present drawing and a watercolour of Constable’s children fishing both belonged to the great late nineteenth-century collector and dealer Charles Fairfax Murray. It was subsequently owned by Edward Waldo Forbes (1873–1969) the inspirational Director of the Fogg Art Museum between 1909 and 1944.

**NOTES**

1. Other sheets from the 1827 sketchbook are watermarked: ‘J W Huntman 1824’. See for example: Graham Reynolds, The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable, New Haven and London, 1984, cat. no.27.34, which was also in Charles Fairfax Murray’s collection.


4. ‘It is very interesting to see the 4th generation of our family here – and all heads are out of the doors & windows – and Minna looks so nice in her pelisse – the blew band or what it is called was a picture.’ John Constable to Maria Constable, East Bergholt 4 October 1827, ed. R. Beckett, John Constable’s Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable), Suffolk Record Society, vol. vi, 1964, p.439.


Peter Paul Rubens
A View of the Stien in the Early Morning
Oil on panel
51 ⅝ x 90 ¼ inches · 1312 x 2292 mm
© The National Gallery, London
A STORMY HEATH

Oil on panel
6¼ x 6¾ inches; 160 x 171 mm
Signed with initials and dated 1837

COLLECTIONS
Presumably, Robert Ross, (1869–1938);
Presumably, Arthur Clifton (1863–1932);
Thomas Agnew & Sons, acquired from
the above;
William Harris QC, acquired from the
above in 1963;
And by descent to 2018

LITERATURE
Patricia Allderidge, The Late Richard Dadd
1817–1886, exh. cat., London, Tate Gallery, 1974,
p.47, no.11, repr.

EXHIBITED
London, Tate Gallery, The Late Richard Dadd
1817–1886, 1974–5, touring Exhibition to Hull,
Ferens Art Gallery, Wolverhampton, Municipal
Art Gallery and Bristol, City Art Gallery, no.11;
Brighton, Museum & Art Gallery, Bronzino to
Boy George: Treasures from Sussex Houses,
1985.

This intensely worked oil sketch was made by Richard Dadd at the beginning of his career. Dadd appears to have started serious-
ly drawing at the age of thirteen whilst he was a pupil at the King's School, Rochester and was probably first taught by the only
local drawing master, William Dadson, who had a drawing academy in Chatham. In 1834 Dadd's family moved to London and settled
in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, a few doors away from the headquarters and exhibition rooms
of the Society of British Artists. It was from
this location that Dadd's father, Robert,
pursued his new profession as a carver,
gilder, frame maker and artists' supplier. As
a result, Robert Dadd became acquainted
with the landscape painters David Roberts
and Clarkson Stanfield. Richard seems to
have informally studied drawing after the
antique at the British Museum before being admitted, in May 1837, as a Probationer to
the Royal Academy Schools on the recom-
mandation of Clarkson Stanfield. During his
time at the Schools the Visiting Professors
included Macklin, Mulready, Etty, Stanfield
who all appear to have had some influ-
ence on his work. His fellow students also
included John Phillip and William Powell
Frith and it was about this time that the
three formed an informal sketching club,
The Clique, which also included Augustus
Egg, Alfred Elmore, William Bell Scott and
Henry Nelson O'Neil.

This atmospheric landscape was painted in 1837 during Richard Dadd's first year as
a student at the Royal Academy Schools. In
these early years at the Academy Schools,
Dadd began to show the exceptional
promise which was to win him awards and
plaudits from his contemporaries and fellow
students. Frith was to remember that 'Dadd
was my superior in all respects; he drew
infinitely better than I did'.

Dadd began exhibiting at the Society of British Artists
in 1837 with a 'head of a man' and in the
following year landscapes of Kentish and
West Country views.

This brooding painting belongs to a
small group of surviving works in both
watercolour and oil. These small-scale works
appear to record the scenery to be found in
the Chatham area which included Cobham
Park. A cabinet painting on panel of similar
size and similarly signed and dated is in the
collection of York City Art Gallery.

NOTE
1. William Powell Frith, My Autobiography and
to Dadd by the pioneering physician Dr Charles Hood as a form of treatment. Given their subject-matter and the location of their execution, Dadd’s images are susceptible to multiple interpretations and have been the subject of a great deal of discussion. They represent perhaps the most important documented artistic project undertaken in a psychiatric hospital during the nineteenth century.

Richard Dadd was born in Chatham, Kent the son of a chemist. In 1834, at the age of 17, he moved with his family to London. Following his early artistic promise Dadd entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1835, where he won medals for drawing and painting; he was considered an outstanding student in a group which included a number of future celebrated painters including William Powell Firth, Augustus Egg and John Phillip. In 1842 on the recommendation of David Roberts, Dadd was employed to accompany Sir Thomas Phillips as artist and travelling companion on a tour of Europe and the Near and Middle East. During the latter part of the journey Dadd began to show the first signs of mental disturbance becoming increasingly watchful, suspicious and unpredictable. Dadd began to hear voices and began to believe that the Egyptian god Osiris was the supreme being and the source of his ‘secret admonitions.’

They seem to have devised a project that would allow, in the words of the great nineteenth-century psychiatrist Forbes Winslow: ‘allow genius to search for an illustration of his own condition.’ Louise Lippincott was the first to associate the series of drawings Dadd made depicting individual passions from 1853 with the work of the medical superintendent of Bethlem, W. Charles Wood, suggesting that Wood urged Dadd to complete a series of depictions of the passions as part of his treatment. Lippincott argued that Wood used the exercises to both assist in the diagnosis of Dadd’s mental state and provide a form of cure. According to the conventions of the period the key to understanding monomania was an acute analysis of the passions, the basic emotions, appetites, and needs that, with the intellect and the soul, comprised the psyche. Wood seems to have devised a project that would allow, in the words of the great nineteenth-century psychiatrist Forbes Winslow: ‘allow genius to search for an illustration of his own condition.’ As Lippincott has pointed out Dadd’s images are susceptible to multiple interpretations and have been the subject of a great deal of discussion. They represent perhaps the most important documented artistic project undertaken in a psychiatric hospital during the nineteenth century.

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On 28 August 1843 Dadd persuaded his father to accompany him to Colham Park in Kent, where he stabbed him to death with a knife purchased specifically for the purpose. Dadd later explained that he had killed the devil in disguise and seems to have retained this belief throughout his life, talking obliquely about the murder as an event for which he had no personal responsibility. Dadd was certified insane and committed to the criminal lunatic asylum attached to Bethlem Hospital at St George’s Fields in Southwark, south London, where he remained for the remainder of his life.

Despite his incarceration, Dadd continued to paint. A visitor in 1853 wrote of some recent drawings that they ‘inhibit all the power, fury, and judgment for which his works were eminent previous to his insanity. They are absolutely wonderful in delicate finish. They consist principally of landscapes – memories of eastern scenes, or wrought from a small sketchbook in his possession’

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negative, suggesting that they were exercises in externalising his own understanding of each emotion. The present drawing, signed and dated Bethlehem Hospital London May 12th 1854, is inscribed: ‘sketch to illustrate the Passions: Avarice’. Dadd has depicted Avarice in the form of an elderly couple, clearly acting as money lenders. The seated man is shown with fists full of gold coins, a pair of scales, for weighing gold, placed prominently on the desk in front of him. Dadd includes a series of characteristically disquieting details, a black cat arching menacingly, a suit of armour looming in the background and the money lender’s leg twisted nervously round his chair. The old man is identifiable as ‘Simon Bore Clutch’ of ‘Clutch All House’ from a mortgage that lies across his desk. The mortgage – in a characteristically Hogarthian touch – is in the name of the Earl of Frigfarten and had been witnessed by ‘Griffin Goblin’ and ‘Integer Nonentity’. Dadd includes such details in a number of his depictions of passions to imply an internal narrative. A number of the drawings have a semi-autobiographical element, such as the depiction of Insignificance or Self Contempt, which shows an artist returning to his lodgings where a brass plaque announces ‘Crayon/Drawing Master.’ The drawing captures the disappointment of a painter with ambitions forced to subsist teaching amateurs and, as Dadd notes on the drawing: ‘Disgusted with the world – he sinks into himself and Insignificance.’

Here the scene is indebted to seventeenth-century Dutch painted depictions of ‘gold weighers’; one painting in particular by David Teniers shows a similar elderly couple and was engraved in London in the eighteenth century by Carrington Bowles with the title: Age and Avarice. Avarice, as a passion, was much discussed in the nineteenth century. In 1850 the popular author F. Somner Merryweather published Lives and Anecdotes of Miserors, or the passions of Avarice Displayed. Preserved in exceptional condition, Avarice is one of the last of the passion drawings Dadd completed. Viewed within the context of Hood’s programme of treatment, it offers remarkable evidence of both Dadd’s state of mind and mid-nineteenth-century attitudes towards mental illness. Dadd is now rightly regarded as a painter whose enforced withdrawal from society allowed him to refine a unique talent. His Sketches to Illustrate the Passions belong to a long tradition of imagery devoted to human folly, even as its unsettling details, and reliance on memory and imagination anticipate modern sensibilities.

Notes
4. This plausible idea has been questioned by Patricia Allderidge who noted in 2008: ‘the fact that the reforming physician superintendent Sir Charles Hood was appointed to Bethlem Hospital in this year has led to speculation (and sometimes assertion) that Hood suggested the subject as some sort of therapeutic exercise, for which there is no evidence of any sort.’ See Patricia Allderidge, Richard Dadd (1817–1886): Dreams of Fancy, exh. cat., London (Andrew Clayton-Peirce), 2005, p.44.
Richard Dadd

Oil on millboard
8¾ x 7 inches; 220 x 178 mm
Painted c.1837

PROVENANCE
John Humby, a friend and patron of the artist; W. Humby, River Bank, River, Kent by descent to 1921; By gift to the housekeeper of the above; By descent, to 1978; Private collection, 1978–2018

This small, intense portrait of George William Dadd, Richard Dadd’s youngest full brother, was made at the outset of Dadd’s career as a painter. Dadd entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1837, shortly after the institution had moved to the same building as the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. Dadd’s earliest works seem to be portraits of his immediate family, including portraits of Catherine Carter, who was to marry Richard’s eldest brother Robert in 1843, his sister Maria and a sheet of head studies including his father, Robert senior, several siblings and apparently a self-portrait now at the Yale Center for British Art.

The present intensely observed portrait of George Dadd is painted on artists’ mill-board and executed with a miniaturist’s intensity. Dadd has carefully captured his brother, who was only 14 when this likeness was taken. In common with other portraits Dadd made at this moment, such as the Young Lady Holding a Rose of 1841, Dadd has enlarged the right eye giving a somewhat asymmetrical appearance to the face, whilst the features are modelled with remarkable precision. As was the case with his elder brother, George had a life plagued by mental instability. He had apparently long shown extreme behavioural problems, described even by a family friend as ‘a sad reprobate’, George seems to have caused such trouble that, on the death in 1836 of Robert Dadd Jr, the eldest brother, one of their half-brothers (by Robert Sr’s second wife) recalled how, when they were all young men, Robert had stood up as the champion to protect the rights of others from the selfish desires of a weak and erring brother. George, who had worked as a carpenter, had become obviously mentally ill from the spring of 1843 (exactly when Richard’s symptoms first showed themselves) and he eventually returned to the family home on the day after the discovery of their father’s body destitute and delusional. George was admitted to Bethlehem aged twenty on 15 September 1843, one week before Richard arrived at Clermont. Following hospital policy, after a year he was transferred to the incurable wards and died there in 1868.

NOTE
Laura Knight, Study of a Young Woman, 1926
Watercolour with black and sanguine chalks
13 ½ x 9 ¼ inches; 343 x 235 mm
Signed bottom right: ‘Laura Knight’
Private collection, USA, to 2012;
Rupert Maas Ltd.

In 1927 Laura Knight was given access to the ‘coloured wards’ at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore where she produced a sequence of impressive depictions of the patients she encountered, amongst them this striking portrait. Knight’s husband, Harold had travelled to Baltimore to paint staff at the hospital; the generous fee enabled him to bring Laura to America. The Knights stayed with Dr William Baer, the orthopaedic surgeon and his wife, and it was through his influence that Laura was able to paint patients at the hospital. Knight described her experiences in Baltimore in her autobiography, Oil Paint and Grease Paint, published in 1936. It is an account that betrays the prejudices of her time and belies the sensitivity of her work.

This intelligent and subtle portrait study of a male patient is one of the more powerful from a sequence of depictions of black sitters that Knight produced.

Knight’s interest in black patients, as Rosie Broadley has noted, was part of a wider fascination in Britain in the 1920s with what was called ‘Negro’ culture. In her autobiography, Knight describes her friendship with Baer’s nurse and secretary, Ireen and Pearl Johnson, her visit with them to a concert and a social at the office of a negro newspaper where she heard a speech of ‘amazing eloquence … exhorting his audience to remember that they were a great race.’

Knight’s Baltimore drawings are some of her most powerful and this bold head study stands as one of her most forceful. The present drawing demonstrates Knight’s interest in the people she encountered, whilst the somewhat wary gaze of the sitter suggests his equivocal response to being drawn.

NOTES
2. Laura Knight, Oil Paint and Grease Paint, New York, 1936, pp.268–269.
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