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This catalogue of our recent acquisitions is certainly longer than its predecessors and, to my mind, it is also unquestionably richer in its contents. We have been fortunate in being able to gather together some exceptional works of great beauty, extreme rarity and historical importance, a number of which have emerged onto the market after long periods of obscurity.

It is a great privilege to be able to offer extraordinary paintings by both William Blake and Samuel Palmer. The beguiling fluency of Our Beautiful Fool is perhaps the most sophisticated drawing by Blake. The beguiling fluency of our hugely accomplished and captivating John the Baptist is one of Blake’s best preserved paintings and was possibly the first work by the artist to enter a North American collection. It is serendipitous to be able to show it with Palmer’s wonderful Landscape - Twilight of c.1835. This luminous Shoreham period work is perhaps Palmer’s most beautiful oil and has remained, uncleaned and in the same family collection since about 1890.

Another remarkable re-emergence is Joshua Reynolds’s emotionally charged Doryann Atnagrac. This painting, only known to art historians on the basis of a rare print, shows Reynolds at his most active and painterly at the moment when he was trying to shape a new and elevated British School of painting as first President of the recently formed Royal Academy. The model for this Disciple of St Paul was George White, a street mender, and here we see Reynolds looking towards Rembrandt for guidance.

As usual we have gathered an interesting group of portraits, the earliest of which is a fascinating etching by Arthur Pond of a female amateur artist at her easel. Pastels are further represented by lovely and characteristic examples by Gardner and Hamilton. Copley’s most elaborate drawing, a study for the important group of the Pepperrell family was acquired by us from a descendant of the artist and although recently sold, we include it here. A complex and masterful pastel comprising a compendium of heads of his many talents. Jonny Yarker is entirely responsible for the catalogue entries (other than the three mentioned above) and has coped well with my frequent well-meaning suggestions. The excellence of the notes bear testament to his many talents. Jonny’s remarkable knowledge, keen curiosity and excellent eye continue to amaze and he has made a significant contribution to the business since he joined us two years ago. As usual, Laurence Allan has been responsible for the high standard of framing and the hanging of our various shows. Deborah Greenhalgh and Yarker are a back-up duo of incomparable efficiency and tremendous good humour and they keep the entire show on the road.

We all hope to see our many friends over the coming year either at the gallery in London or when we are exhibiting in New York and at Maastricht.

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The present portrait is a rare image of a female pastellist at work executed during the early eighteenth century. Comparable to the portrait of the amateur draughtswoman Rhoda Delaval, also by Arthur Pond in the National Portrait Gallery, it probably shows an autodidact amateur at work. During the 1730s and 1740s pastel or ‘crayons’ became a hugely popular medium amongst an intimate circle of patrician women, and Pond, who was already by this date a successful portraitist in the medium, became the most fashionable tutor in London. Whilst the sitter of the present portrait cannot be identified with total certainty, the number of circumstantial clues point towards Lady Helena Perceval (1714–1798), the daughter of the Anglo-Irish statesman and intellectual John Perceval, 1st Earl of Egmont, who was a talented draughtswoman and is recorded sitting to Pond in 1737.1 Whilst this identification may not be entirely secure, the present compelling portrait stands as a representation of a highly significant moment of female, amateur creativity in a circle of aristocratic friends with court connections. The present portrait is a rare image of a female pastellist at work executed during the early eighteenth century. Comparable to the portrait of the amateur draughtswoman Rhoda Delaval, also by Arthur Pond in the National Portrait Gallery, it probably shows an autodidact amateur at work. During the 1730s and 1740s pastel or ‘crayons’ became a hugely popular medium amongst an intimate circle of patrician women, and Pond, who was already by this date a successful portraitist in the medium, became the most fashionable tutor in London. Whilst the sitter of the present portrait cannot be identified with total certainty, the number of circumstantial clues point towards Lady Helena Perceval (1714–1798), the daughter of the Anglo-Irish statesman and intellectual John Perceval, 1st Earl of Egmont, who was a talented draughtswoman and is recorded sitting to Pond in 1737.1 Whilst this identification may not be entirely secure, the present compelling portrait stands as a representation of a highly significant moment of female, amateur creativity in a circle of aristocratic friends with court connections.
the following year he sold a set to another noted collector, Sir William Morice of Werrington. *Carriers* fame, her status as a woman artist, and the attractive, decorative compositions – four young women holding the emblems of each season – made them frequent subjects of amateur copyists.

As has been frequently observed ‘crayons’ pastels were less time consuming than oils, easier to use and less messy in application, making them ideal for amateurs, whilst their intense colours and versatility made them an attractive and highly decorative accomplishment to master. The first significant female pupil we know Pond had was Grace Carteret, Countess of Pomfret. The following year he sold a set to another noted collector, Sir William Morice of Werrington. *Carriers* fame, her status as a woman artist, and the attractive, decorative compositions – four young women holding the emblems of each season – made them frequent subjects of amateur copyists.

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works of art in the form of portraits, copies, caricatures and landscapes was extremely common as an expression of friendship and intimacy. An album of drawings by amateurs from Mary Delany’s circle preserved in the Lily Library in Indiana contains a drawing, possibly by Mary Delany herself, of Lady Helena’s sister, Lady Catherine Hammner at an easel apparently working in pastel.21 Whilst no helpful early provenance for the present portrait is known it is accompanied by three pastel copies probably by the sitter depicted in our portrait by Pond. The four pastels are all framed in identical, japanned, black and gilt frames, which are similar to frames used by the Irish ornithological painter Samuel Dun. Two of the copies have hanging instructions in an eighteenth-century hand on the reverse, suggesting the four pastels formed part of a decorative scheme at some point. Two of the copies are after two of Rosalba Carriera’s Four Seasons – Winter and Summer – adding weight to the theory that they are the product of one of Pond’s amateur pastellists.

Pond’s portrait is a compelling image of an amateur pastellist at work, drawn at a moment when the medium was being practiced by a group of fashionable and well-connected aristocratic women. Whilst identification of the sitter remains allusive, the references to Pond’s portrait of Lady Helena Perceval, her ability as an artist and the striking physical likeness offers one possibility. Lady Helena Perceval was at the heart of a group of women who were keen amateur pastellists who took lessons from Pond and practiced at the highest level, drawing each other and exchanging portraits and copies of old masters as signs of their friendship and accomplishment. This remarkable image and its associated works offer a remarkable insight into the world of eighteenth-century female amateur art.

We are extremely grateful to Clarissa Campbell Orr, Mary Delany’s biographer, and Neil Jeffares for their help in preparing this note.

NOTES
9 The Earl of Egmont noted in 1752, ‘went to see the works of Mr Less, former to the king, and enamet painter, who teachs my daughter Helena to draw, and afterwards to see Zosman’s paintings in St Martin’s Lane.’ Ed. R.A. Roberts, Royal Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont, London, 1988, LIV, p.237.
This refined varnished mixed-media drawing was made by Gainsborough at Bath in the early 1770s; an experimental process, these rapidly worked, highly evocative sheets underline Gainsborough’s deeply personal engagement with the processes of landscape drawing. These drawings also acted as vehicles for his experimentation with both techniques and materials. The method used in this particular drawing was outlined in a letter which gives a sense of his innovation. In the present drawing Gainsborough has matched technical invention with a novelty of approach, in the present sheet Gainsborough has created an almost abstract composition, where abbreviated forms are used to suggest an open landscape under an open sky. We know from contemporaries that these ambiguous drawings, devoid of specific narrative, were highly prized by collectors and keenly discussed as works imbued with feeling. This large, varnished sheet, belongs to a particularly important and well documented group of Gainsborough’s landscape drawings and is an unusually bold and attractive example. Gainsborough’s own description of producing varnished drawings such as this, is contained in a letter dated 29 January 1773 written to his friend William Jackson. Jackson, an amateur landscape painter himself, had evidently asked for the method Gainsborough used to produce such varnished drawings. Gainsborough warned him that: “There is no Man living that you can mentions (besides your self and one more, living) that shall ever know my secret of making those studies you mention.” He then explained:

... take half a sheet of blotting paper such as the Clerks and those that keep books put upon writing instead of sand; ’tis a spongy purple paper. Paste that and half a sheet of white paper; of the same size, together, let them dry, and in that state keep them for use – take a Frame of deal about two Inches larger every way, and paste, or glue, a few sheets of very large substantial paper, no matter what sort, thick brown, Han, or any; then cut out a square half an inch less than the size of your papers for Drawing; so that it may serve for a perpetual stretching Frame or your Drawings; that is to say after you have dip’d your drawings as I shall by & by direct in a liquid, in that wet state you are to take, and run some hot glue and with a brush run round the borders of your stretchers, gluing about half an inch broad which is to receive your half an inch extraordinary allow’d for the purpose in your drawing paper, so that when that dries, it may be like a drum. Now before you do any thing by way of stretching, make the black & white of your drawing, the Effect I mean, & disposition in rough, Indian Ink shadows & your lights of Bristol made white lead which you buy in lumps at any house painters; saw it the size you want for your white chalk, the Bristol is harder and more the temper of chalk than the London. When you see your Effect, dip it all over in skim’d milk; put it wet on your Frame (just glued as before observed) let it dry, and then you correct your [illegible] with Indian Ink & if you want to add more lights, or other, do it and dip again, till all your Effect is to your mind; then tinge in your greens your browns with sap green & Bistre, your yellows with Gall stone & blues with fine Indigo.

Gainsborough finally observed: ‘varnish it 3 times with Spirit Varnish such as I sent you; though only Mastic & Venice Turpentine is sufficient, then cut out your drawing but observe it must be Varnished both sides to keep it flat.’
The present sheet, probably made in about 1772, precisely represents this process. The letter is remarkable because it suggests both Gainsborough’s level of inventive- ness, awareness of materials – note his use of paper not designed for drawing – and pursuit of innovative techniques to create novel effects in his landscape composi- tions. Gainsborough has used a rich brown paper and then built up the composition, first adding the lead white, to lay in the cattle, seated figures and the suggestion of the landscape and tree. As the letter suggests this was not chalk, technical analysis undertaken by Jonathan Dore in other varnished drawings has proved that it was dry white pigment, consistent with the Bristol lead white mentioned by Gainsborough. The drawing could then be dipped in milk and washes applied to build up the landscape. This gradual process can be seen in the two most distant cows, whilst the white lead highlights repel washes, the bodies are ink, allowing the different washes in the background to remain visible. Gainsborough has used a deep bistre wash to give depth to the landscape. Whilst the drawing is in outstanding condition, the fugitive nature of ‘fine Indigo’ means that the blues of the sky have faded.

The motif of the drawing – herdsmen and cattle – is typical of Gainsborough’s landscape drawings and raises the ques- tion of its appeal to contemporaries. His varnished sheets – some measuring over a metre in length – occupied an unusual place in Gainsborough’s extensive oeuvre, being, as he stated, prepared for exhibition at the Royal Academy. Whilst the present stark composition seems unlikely to have been prepared with exhibition in mind, its size and subject matter suggest that it might be one of those sent to London ‘by Zoffani which Gainsborough produced’ as they run off so quick.” The appeal of these works lay in part in their relationship with Dutch seventeenth-century landscapes. From early in his youth Gainsborough had been fascinat- ed by the works of Salomon van Ruysdael, Aelbert Cuyp and Jan van Goyen, the muted palette and simple arrangement of cattle in an open landscape particularly recalls fashionable Dutch prototypes. But there is also evidence that contemporaries read something more immediate and emotional in Gainsborough’s landscapes. The mood of such drawings was well described by Edward Edwards in his Anecdotes of Painters: ‘in his latter works, bold effect, great breadth of form, with little variety of parts, united by a judicious management of light and shade, combine to produce a certain degree of solemnity. This solemnity, though striking, is not easily accounted for, when the simplicity of materials is considered, which seldom represent more than a stony bank, with a few trees, a pond, and some distant hills.’ It was this imperceptible feeling of ‘solemnity’ which probably explained the success of a sheet such as this. There is growing evidence that Gainsborough, in common with his contemporaries, such as Alexander Cozens, was conscious of the ability for his landscape drawings to suggest certain emotions.

This varnished drawing should be regard- ed as an exceptional work, not only within Gainsborough’s oeuvre, but in our under- standing of the development of landscape drawing in Britain during the eighteenth century. In the present sheet Gainsborough combines the simple compositional motifs learnt from Dutch seventeenth-century painters with an emotional ambiguity which would become central to the art of Romanticism.

Notes
4 Gainsborough showed two large varnished landscapes at the Academy in 1772, tradition- ally identified as the ‘Cartoon’ now at Buscot Park and the large drawing at Yale; but the same year he also showed ‘Eight landscapes, drawings, in imitation of oil painting.’ For the mention of Johan Zoffany couriering drawings from Bath to London see John Hayes, p.94.

(17)
This rediscovered masterpiece is one of the most significant additions to Reynolds’s oeuvre in recent years. Long known about from a contemporary engraving by Isaac Jehner, the painting has been untraced since 1905.1 Dating from about 1772, the canvas belongs to an important group of pictures depicting Reynolds’s favourite model, the paviour George White, the most famous of which is Reynolds’s 1773 Ugolino and his Children (Knole House). Made shortly after the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768, the painting is a fascinating distillation of Reynolds’s ambitions as a history painter. Engraved by Jehner in mezzotint in the same year, it is a powerful visual representation of one of the early academic engravings. The painting was exhibited at the British Institution in 1850, no.55 as Dionysius the Areopagite, lent by John Bentley. This rediscovered masterpiece is one of the most significant additions to Reynolds’s oeuvre in recent years. Long known about from a contemporary engraving by Isaac Jehner, the painting has been untraced since 1905.1 Dating from about 1772, the canvas belongs to an important group of pictures depicting Reynolds’s favourite model, the paviour George White, the most famous of which is Reynolds’s 1773 Ugolino and his Children (Knole House). Made shortly after the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768, the painting is a fascinating distillation of Reynolds’s ambitions as a history painter. Engraved by Jehner in mezzotint in the same year, it is a powerful visual representation of one of the early academic engravings. The painting was exhibited at the British Institution in 1850, no.55 as Dionysius the Areopagite, lent by John Bentley.
Old George...and so the idea of his subject gradually developed. It may be said, as Reynolds himself expressed it, that: ‘This was the case in which he passed his latter days, in a great measure for Sir Joshua Reynolds, who found him exerting himself
in the laudable employment of bringing down from the inner sanctum of classic art the grand and majestic traits of his countenance, but the dignity of his muscular figure, took him out of a situation to which his strength was by no means equal, clothed, fed, and had him first, as a model at his own painting-room, then introduced him as a subject for the students of the Royal Academy.’

As Martin Postle has pointed out, whilst characterful studies of old men posed as biblical figures, prophets or saints, Continental old masters were readily available on the art market – Reynolds himself had copied a head of Job by Federico Barocci in the collection of his friend and patron, Lord Pelhamton – finding a model in Britain from whom to execute a painting was more difficult.4 White therefore offered a rare opportunity for Reynolds to combine portraiture and history painting, by painting a model in the guise of an historical or literary character. Having been discovered, White therefore offered Reynolds an impression as a street mender. The unusual title of George White in Dionysius Areopagite implies a specific art historical context. Dionysius Areopagite, a disciple of St Paul, was the subject of the most famous painting in Britain in the eighteenth century: Raphael’s St Paul Preaching in Athens one of the Tapestry Cartoons then housed at Hampton Court. Jonathan Richardson, in his 1737 Theory of Painting, had particularly recommended Raphael’s depiction of St Paul and the audience: ‘the different sentiments of his auditors are as finely express’d; some appear to be angry within themselves, or with one another; and One especially is apparently Comr’d. These last are the Free-Thinkers of that Time.’5

Indeed it is probable that Reynolds, whilst contemplating his new role as both history painter and art historian, had returned to Richardson’s writings. The story of Ugolino and his sons had been memorably described by Richardson in his 1725 Two Discourses, suggesting that he was actively using Richardson’s writings as a source of inspiration. Reynolds undoubtedly saw in Raphael’s beard, elderly spectacles of St Paul’s sermon possible spectators of St Paul’s preaching. Reynolds’s work. The dramatic, dark palette, which impacted upon his portrait style, was more difficult. Without a specific narrative in mind.7 It is therefore likely that the present painting began as a life study. Probable in around 1772, when Reynolds’s account books record a number of sittings with ‘George White 1757 from the connoisseur and collector Dr Bragge; it had previously belonged to Jonathan Richardson himself.10 The Darwinian explanation as an impression of St Bartholomew from his own experience, the subject-matter of Reynolds. As a number of characterful paintings of male saints, usually stripped of extraneous detail, the paintings act as intense psychological portraits of his models, an approach which had obvious appeal to the master portraitist Reynolds. But even more than the subject-matter, it was Reynolds’s fluid, painterly technique in pictures such as St Bartholomew–which impacted upon Reynolds’s work. The dramatic, dark palette, the bold, broad application of paint and the almost haphazard application of highlights were all features Reynolds studied and emulated. Reynolds’s approach was clearly one Reynolds had considered carefully, writing in the 1759 Two Discourses Reynolds noted that Rembrandt, in order to take the advantage of accident, appears often to have used the pallet-knife to lay his colours on the canvass instead of the pencil. Whether it is the knife of any other instrument, it suffices, if it is something that does not follow exactly the will. Accident in the hands of an artist who knows how to take the advantage of its arts, will often produce bold and capricious beauties of handling. White’s hair is thickly painted with impatrics which is consistent with the use of a palette-knife. Elsewhere Reynolds has used a loaded brush to convey a sense of spontaneity: for example the serpentine line defining White’s shoulder. Reynolds has also added thick, dry highlights at the end of the painting process, consistent with Rembrandt’s
his attempts to capture the effects of old master painters. Reynolds was famous for attempting to understand historic process by exploring the underpainting of old masters he acquired at auction. Samuel Redgrave recounted a contemporary anecdote of a pupil of Benjamin West: ‘who possessed portraits by both Titian and Rubens which he said had belonged to Sir Joshua, and parts of which, to obtain wished-for secret, had been scraped or rubbed down to the panel, so lay bare the under-painting or dead colouring. ’ 11 The early history of Dionysius Areopagite, once it left Reynolds’s possession, is unknown. The nineteenth-century catalogue of Reynolds’s oeuvre, Alcieron Graves and William Vine Cronin, speculated that it may have been the work purchased at Reynolds’s posthumous sale of 1796 by Joseph Farington, entitled ‘An old man’s head looking up’. 12 Martin Postle has suggested other possibilities. 13 By 1850, when it was first exhibited in public at the British Institution (no.55 ‘Dionysus the Areopagite’), the picture was owned by John Bentley, whose armorial bookplate is still pasted to the back of the canvas. Both John Bentley, whose seat was at Birch House, Farnworth, Lancashire, and his father, also John Bentley, purchased great eighteenth-century British pictures. As well as Dionysius Areopagite, Bentley’s posthumous sale of 1850 included Joseph Wright of Derby’s Conventual Basilica and his Julian Landscape (San Martino), both now in the collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, versions of Apollo and the Sibyl by Richard Wilson and a version of The Cottage Door by Gainsborough (possibly by Gainsborough Dupont), as well as works by William Dobson, Peter Lely, Thomas Lawrence, George Romney, and Samuel Scott. 14 Following Bentley’s posthumous sale, the picture passed to the owner of West Bilton Hall, East Winch, Norfolk, where it was last recorded in 1905. The rediscovery of this major work by Reynolds adds an important canvas to a crucial moment in the development of his art. Painted at the moment Reynolds transformed his practice from commercial portraitist to encompass history painting and from a private man of business to a public artist and President of the Royal Academy, the Dionysius Areopagite is a fascinating and emblematic painting. Considered as a life study of Reynolds’s favourite model, George White, it was published as an historical work which looked back to both Raphael and Rembrandt. As well as its historical significance, the Dionysius Areopagite is a profoundly moving and exquisitely painted celebration of Reynolds’s powers as characterisation and fluency as a technician. As an addition to Reynolds’s oeuvre its importance cannot be overstated and will accordingly form the subject of an article in The Burlington Magazine written by Dr Martin Postle.
Daniel Gardner c.1750–1805

The Hon. Mary Shuttleworth, née Cockburn (d.1777) and her sister Anna Maria, 9th Baroness Forrester (d.1808)

Pastel and gouache on paper laid on canvas, on their original backboards

Oval 30 x 17 inches · 76 x 43 cm

Executed in 1776

This striking, recently rediscovered pair of portraits of Anna Maria, 9th Baroness Forrester and her sister, the Hon Mary Shuttleworth, show Daniel Gardner at the height of his powers as a portraitist. The sitters were the daughters of the Hon. Caroline Baillie, Baronesse Forrester and her husband Capt. George Cockburn KX of Ormiston, East Lothian who was Comptroller of the Navy from 1761 until 1770. The portraits seem likely to have been executed in 1776, the year Mary Cockburn married the Rev. Charles Shuttleworth of Aston in Derbyshire. Her elder sister, Anna Maria, became the 9th Baroness Forrester on the death of their mother, but died without issue.

Gardner’s portraiture occupies an unusual position within the history of British painting during the eighteenth century. By the late 1770s, Gardner was one of the most successful and prolific painters in London having created a hugely popular portrait formula, reproducing in pastel on a reduced-scale the fashionable poses and postures of full-sized works by Sir Joshua Reynolds and George Romney. Conversely, unlike the masters he imitated, Gardner’s success was achieved without the use of London’s exhibiting societies: he showed only one picture at the Royal Academy and never submitted a work to the Society of Artists. As a result Gardner was therefore working for Reynolds at the moment he was experimenting with his grandest and most impressive exhibition portraits. Shortly after establishing his own practice, Gardner began to produce works in pastel which closely followed the fashions established by his former master, simply replicating poses and compositions on a more domestic scale. The present portraits perfectly illustrate Gardner’s working method. Mary Shuttleworth is shown with her hand resting on her chin, dressed in loose classical costume, in a pose which is modelled on Reynolds’ full-length portrait of Mary, Duchess of Ancaster now at Houghton Hall, Norfolk. The addition of an urn and still life of flowers adds to the decorative quality of the composition. Gardner developed a novel technique using pastel to approximate the appearance of oil. By combining pure pastel with a liquid vehicle he was able to create a range of textures, from the soft rendering of features and hair, to the more broadly handled landscape of Lady Forrester. In the present work the areas of greatest opacity, such as the costumes, are created using Gardner’s distinctive technique. The domestic scale of Gardner’s works, their charm and sweetness meant he was frequently commissioned to paint family groups and children. The present pair are an extremely fine example of Gardner’s technique and manner, perfectly illustrating why he was such a successful artist. It was Gardner’s clever distillation of Reynolds and Romney’s style into a domestic scale which made him extremely popular with American collectors of the early twentieth century.

John Dixon, after Sir Joshua Reynolds

Mezzotint · 24 ⅜ x 38 ⅛ inches · 620 x 965 mm

© The Trustees of the British Museum

Notes
This watercolour is part of a small group made by John Robert Cozens in the same format in about 1776 which depict historical scenes. The dramatic, concentrated roundels demonstrate Cozens’s early absorption of his father, Alexander’s innovative pictorial techniques, but in their breadth of handling and communication of intense atmosphere point towards the sublimity of his mature works. The subject of this roundel in particular is of great historical importance. Illustrating a passage from Livy, showing Hannibal and his men viewing the Po valley beyond the foothills of the Alps, a scene no other artist had chosen as the subject of a history painting during the eighteenth century. Perhaps more importantly it was a subject which Cozens would treat again in his only recorded oil painting, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1776. As the nineteenth-century painter and art writer C.R. Leslie noted:

John Robert Cozens exhibited only one oil at the Royal Academy during his lifetime, a picture entitled A Landscape with Hannibal in His March Over the Alps, Showing to his Army the Fertile Plains of Italy. This I have heard was an oil picture so fine that Turner spoke it as a work from which he learned more than anything he had seen before.

Cozens’s great oil painting of Hannibal in His March Over the Alps has been missing since 1876, making the present wash roundel a crucial piece of evidence in understanding the lost work. Hannibal Showing to his Army the Fertile Plains of Italy is also one of the most compelling early essays by Cozens executed before he took his transformative trip to Italy later the same year with Richard Payne Knight.
The composition of the present work, like the other roundels from the same sequence, show John Robert Cozens experimenting with the kind of fantastic rock formations most closely associated with the work of his father, Alexander Cozens. Indeed it has been suggested that these early roundels actually evolved from blues. Alexander Cozens had developed a method of compositional invention which was reliant on accidental or random mark-making, known as ‘blot drawings’—to form the basis for more finished landscape sheets. The present drawing, which shows Hannibal and his men standing on a jagged escarpment with a subtly receding landscape in the background, anticipates the kind of Alpine view Cozens would become famous for depicting after his Continental tour, pointing to an early technical sophistication. It has not previously been noted but in one of the other roundels in this group, the Flot at Anchor in a Reddy Cove (possibly Ulysse’s Flot in the Bay of Laestrigonia) now in the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston, Cozens uses scratching out to suggest the spray on the rocks, a technique he would pioneer in his later Alpine views.4

The precise context of the ensuing roundels is unclear. The first four appeared on the market in 1933, the fifth at auction in 1951 having descended from Cozens’s illegitimate daughter; whilst two of them seem to depict Miltonic subjects—mutter and two Homeric subjects, the fifth is Hannibal in His March Over the Alps from Livy. Given their format, they may well have been designed as book illustrations and Oppé even suggested that they may have been associated with an uncompleted project initiated by William Beckford.5 This imaginative watercolour stands as important evidence for Cozens’s pre-Italian work, his technical breadth and compositional innovation. The image also preserves Cozens’s most innovative subject matter and provides significant evidence for his lost oil, a work which had tremendous impact on Turner and the conception of sublime landscape in the Romantic era.6

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4 Martin Butlin, Aspects of British Painting 1750-1840, From the Collection of Mr Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston, 1988,  
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Cozens’s earliest Alpine views, it does not depict a sweeping valley floor; the expansive views of his Savoyard scenes have been cropped, to focus on the stark grandeur of the mountains themselves. As Kim Sloan has noted, Cozens’s views of the Reichenbach are ‘realized by the elimination of traditional compositional tools. Distance and horizons are no longer represented and the viewer is faced with a sheer wall of rock that threatens to enclose him by surrounding or reaching over him, and blocking out even the sky.’

Cozens has taken evident delight in the towering rock formations, placing the escarpment on the left almost at the top of the composition, encroaching far into the space generally reserved for the sky. The view shows a debt to Alexander Cozens’s theory of composition which demanded that masses should alternate on either side; thus the peaks on the left are shown as lower, with a wedge-shaped valley in between. ‘The economic, almost monochrome palette adds to the drama of the scene, giving the masses of the mountains covered in spiky, skeletal trees an almost menacing quality. Indeed the drawing is close to one prepared by Alexander Cozens in his Various Species of Composition of Landscapes in Nature which entitled: ‘Tops of Hills or Mountains’.

Cozens was deeply affected by the sublime nature of the Alpine landscape, but he mediated his response through the compositional theories of his father and contemporary literary and poetic associations. Recent work has shown that very few watercolours were made ‘on the spot’ by British artists travelling on the Continent and from the visual evidence, Cozens’s Payne Knight Alpine watercolours were long thought to be based on a series of drawings assumed no longer to survive. The present highly energized drawing and its, rough, spontaneous finish suggest that the present sheet may well be one of the drawings Cozens made on the spot.

Regardless of its status, the present drawing is a particularly important example from Cozens’s first great series of landscape watercolours, a visual essay on responses to the sublime in nature. Cozens’s Alpine Landscape near Grindelwald and other sheets from this trip, had an enormous impact upon the next generation of landscape artists in Britain, including J. M. W. Turner and Thomas Girtin.

Notes
Oil on paper laid down on canvas 13 ½ x 21 ¾ inches · 343 x 552 mm
Signed and inscribed: ‘MONT MELIAN / in Savoy / T. JONES No. XVIII’ (lower right)
Painted in 1776

collections
Thomas Jones, Anna Maria Thomas, daughter of the above; 
Jane Evan-Thomas, by descent; 
Private collection, by gift from the above, 1986; 
Private collection, USA, 2014.

literature

Rental

Thomas Jones 1742–1803
Montmélian in Savoy

This boldly handled painting dates from Thomas Jones’s important European Grand Tour, when he executed a series of celebrated oil sketches of landscapes and buildings. Successful during his own lifetime, but largely forgotten after his death, Jones has received a great deal of attention in recent years as a result of these powerful plein air studies. The present view, which is unusually ambitious and expansive in its scope, was painted at the beginning of Jones’s tour, as he travelled through France to Rome. Carefully inscribed ‘Mont Melian / in Savoy / T. JONES No. XVIII’ it formed part of a sequence of views which remained in Jones’s family and passed to his daughters. Following Thomas Jones’s death in 1803, his pictures were inherited by his two daughters, Anna Maria and Elizabeth. The present picture descended to Jones’s elder daughter, Anna Maria who married Thomas Esq. of Llanbradach, Glamorgan.

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. 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.

On Saturday 2 November 1776 Thomas Jones recorded in his journal his journey in Savoy from Chambéry through Montmélian to a hostelry at Planaise, noting: ‘Some effects of Light & Shade from broken Clouds & rugged Mountains were wonderfully fine, made a Sketch of Montmelian from hence.’

The present atmospheric view of the town of Montmélian seems likely to have been the result. Jones frequently made plein air drawings which he subsequently worked-up in oil. The present painting was begun on paper – probably as a drawing – then painted over in oil and later laid down on canvas; this small painting can therefore be identified as the ‘Sketch of Montmélian’ made from Planaise recorded in Jones’s diary. The expansive view shows the landscape of Savoy, where a field is being ploughed in the foreground, beyond is the town of Montmélian with the distinctive arches of the Pont de l’Isère in the foreground.

In its combination of subject matter, technique and atmosphere, this work is an impressive example of Jones’s rare Continental oil sketches. As such it is not only a significant work by a crucial British painter, but a work which has a wider European significance, offering a valuable precedent for the countless French, German and British painters who would produce oil landscape studies en plein air in Italy after 1800.

notes
This is the largest and most impressive preparatory drawing for Romney’s famous portrait of the Gower Children now in Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal. Romney was a bold and incisive draughtsman who made numerous rich brown ink studies, principally for historical compositions; by contrast, comparatively few studies linked directly to his portraits survive. The existence of a group of studies for the Gower Children underscores its importance to Romney. The sitters were the five youngest of the eight children of Granville, 2nd Earl Gower who, at the time the portrait was commissioned, was President of the Council in Lord North’s government and one of the best-connected and most influential people in England.

The present drawing which is a large scale treatment of the composition in its final form perfectly embodies Romney’s conceit: the younger children dancing whilst their elder sister, in the guise of a Bacchante plays the tambourine. The bold and dramatic study underscores both the artistic confidence and classical grandeur Romney gained during his trip to Italy between 1773 and 1775.

The commission from Granville, and Earl Gower to paint five of his children came shortly after Romney’s Continental tour.1 The initial idea, as represented by the present drawing, seems to have been to paint Lady Anne, the figure on the right of the composition playing the tambourine, who was the youngest of Gower’s first four children by his second wife Lady Louisa Egerton and who married the Rev. Edward Vernon Harcourt, later Archbishop of York, with three of her younger half-siblings by Gower’s third wife, Lady Susanna Stewart: at the left Lady Georgina, who became Countess of St Germans following her marriage to the Hon. William Eliot; at the right Lady Charlotte Sophia, later Duchess of Beaufort and in the centre Lady Susanna, later Countess of Harrowby. Romney added a fifth child to the finished portrait,
Poussin’s Bacchanal has always been associated in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, the remarkable group portrait of the Viscount Granville and Earl Granville. In the present drawing, Romney has structured a composition which uses the idea of interlocking female figures animated in dance for a portrait study: the three youngest daughters are carefully articulated so that their faces are visible. In the Gower Children there was a patron and commission which offered the perfect opportunity. Romney created the vocabulary of quotations from classical antiquity and old master paintings he had acquired in Italy; the ‘materials of genius’ praised by Reynolds in his Discourses. Conscious of the prevailing fashion for semi-historicated portraits in, what Reynolds termed, the ‘great style’, Romney formulated an erudite formula which would appeal to his aristocratic patron and his peers; Reynolds noted in his last Discourse that such portraits were ‘artificial in the highest degree, it presupposes in the spectator, a cultivated and prepared artificial state of mind.’

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W. Holl, After Sir Joshua Reynolds, portraits of three ladies adorning the altar of Hymen, 1758, mezzotint. © The Trustees of the British Museum

19 ⅞ inches · 274 505 mm


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approach to painting. Copley began in Italy his first independent historical work, the Ascension (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) made in conscious emulation of Raphael, and most complex group portrait to date: Mr and Mrs Ralph Hard (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). But most importantly, Copley’s exposure to Italian old master’s resulted in a softening of his approach and adoption of a more painterly technique. On returning to London in 1766 he moved to a house in Leicester Fields before beginning his ambitious self-portrait. The Copley Family (National Gallery of Art, Washington). This was followed by an even bigger group composition, the magnificent portrait of Sir William Pepperell and Family which was shown at the Royal Academy in 1778. The political situation which prompted Copley’s decision to leave America also dislodged the Loyalist William Sparhawk Pepperrell. Pepperrell’s grandfather, William Pepperrell II, had been knighted by George II in 1746 for his role in capturing the French garrison at Louisburg in Cape Breton, the first native colonial to receive the honour. Pepperrell inherited his grandfather’s vast fortune, land and position in New England, being chosen as a member of the Governor’s Council (although a recommendation to succeed Thomas Hutchinson as Governor of Massachusetts in 1727 was not acted upon). Pepperrell married Elizabeth Royall, the daughter of one of the most prominent and wealthy merchant families in New England, who had sat to Copley as a child (Museum of Fine Art, Boston). In 1727 the baronetcy was revived in his favour, but shortly afterwards the York County Congress (near Kittery, Maine, the home of the Pepperrell family) passed a resolution declaring that Sir William, a Loyalist, should be ‘detested by all good men’, and that tenants who lived off his land should break all ties with his family. Before Pepperrell finally decided to flee to Britain, Elizabeth, known as Betsy, succumbed to dysentery and died in Boston. Pepperrell therefore arrived in London an exiled widower, with a young family denied an income from his very considerable American lands and property and facing an uncertain future. His decision to commission Copley to paint a conversation piece of his entire family, including his deceased wife, requires some explanation. Pepperrell, as the only American baronet, was an important figurehead for Loyalists in London and was undoubtedly determined to project an image of domestic contentment and continuity as well as underlining to a London audience the extent of his personal losses in supporting the Loyalist cause. Pepperrell’s surviving correspondence shows that, as chairman of the Loyalist Association, he worked hard to assist other Loyalists (both in Britain and America) in obtaining compensation and pensions from the British Treasury, whilst also communicating regularly with members of the British government about the situation in America. Copley and Pepperrell knew each other in London, both were active members of the New England Club moving in similar Loyalist circles. As a result of the prestige of the sitter, the fact that this was the first major portrait commission Copley
had received after his return to London from Italy and that it was undoubtedly destined for the very public walls of the Royal Academy Exhibition, he spent a great deal of time in preparing these and the impact of the central group – the Virgin with an animated Christ child flanked by male and female saints – certainly informed Copley’s ideas for arranging the group. While he eschewed direct quotation, Copley followed Reynolds’s demands, as articulated in the Discourses, of making ‘slight sketches of the machinery and general management’ of an admired painting which could then inform a new composition.11 On his return from the Continent Copley was focused on establishing himself within the competitive London art market and would have been conscious that such an impressive commission would have been exhibited publicly at the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy. While the picture garnered some critical reaction in 1776, it was Copley’s novel historical composition, William and the Shaw, which was exhibited the same year, which was more noticed.12 Copley’s composition also had to compete with contemporary works, such as Joshua Reynolds’s Marborough Family (Belsham Palace, Oxfordshire) and despite lacking the dynamism found in his initial drawing, the canvas won a degree of praise.13 The following spring, however, a commission for which I have a commission from an American nobleman. I half told you of the copy I have been here only one week.’ On 22 August Copley reported the completion of the copy to his half-brother Henry Pelham. Eds. C. F. Adams, G. Jones and W. Ford, 1914, p.44.14


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This characteristic pastel portrait by the Irish artist Hugh Douglas Hamilton depicting a beautiful young woman in a pink turban survives in exceptionally fine preservation and allows us to judge his extraordinary skill as a portraitist in pastel.

Hugh Douglas Hamilton was born in Dublin, the son of a wig maker in Crow Street. He entered the Dublin Society School of Drawing about 1750 and studied under Robert West and James Mannin and was a pupil there for some eight years, winning three premiums for the best drawings of 1756. Hamilton probably left West’s academy in the late 1750s and soon set up a flourishing business as a portraitist in pastels. Hamilton’s small-scale, intimate portrait portraits were immensely popular. Their popularity rested on a combination of the luminous surface quality he achieved, the speed of execution (unlike oils, pastels required no drying time), portability and low cost. As a result of these popularity in 1754 Hamilton moved his practice to London, although he continued to preserve strong contacts with his native Ireland, returning periodically and sending works for exhibition at the Society of Artists in Dublin.

It was their comparatively inexpensiveness which was the most important factor in their popularity. Hamilton’s average price for a small oval portrait was a guinea according to his earliest biographer Thomas Mulvany. Compared with prices being charged by leading London portraitists for oil portraits (Joshua Reynolds was commanding up to 50 guineas for a half-length work during the 1770s). The present example, made just before Hamilton moved to Italy, perfectly reveals his working method. Hamilton began by outlining the head and shoulders in a light tone, then, precisely as the pastellist John Russell notes, added the features in ‘faint carmine tones’ with touches of green used in the shadows. Hamilton then blended the tones on the face to produce the sitter’s delicate complexion. He would then have added the background using the broad side of the pastel. Russell recommended certain colours for the background depending on the age of the sitter, blue was chosen as it contrasts with warm flesh tones of the face. In contrast to the finely drawn face, Hamilton has only blocked in the costume adding graphite lines to delineate certain aspects of the costume and to pick out the sitter’s hair. The extraordinarily fine execution of the present portrait, its subtlety and its remarkable state of preservation underline Hamilton’s ability as a pastellist.
George Barret RA 1732–1784

Lake Ullswater: a party of tourists at the head of the lake

Gouache on paper laid down on linen 19 × 25 ½ inches · 482 × 647 mm
Signed and dated ‘G Barret 22 February 1781’

collections
Private collection, 1986;
Desmond FitzGerald, Knight of Glin.

literature

James Barry writing to the early theorist of the sublime, Edmund Burke, noted that the landscape painter George Barret: presents you with such a glorious assemblage, as I have sometimes seen among high mountains rising into universal agreeable appearances while the early beams of the sun sport themselves... through the vast arcades and sometimes glances on a great lake whose ascending vapours spread themselves like a veil over the distance.

This description of ‘high mountains’ and ‘great lake’ bathed in ‘early beams of sun’ neatly describes Barret’s impressive view of Ullswater. In this gouache view a ferry crosses the lake and a group of figures on the right-hand of the composition pick-up a man. Barret’s view is therefore an early celebration of the tourism to the area stimulated by ideas of the picturesque. Probably made for exhibition, the gouache survives in remarkable preservation and has been consistently praised as one of Barret’s most beautiful late works.

George Barret was born in Ireland, where he attended the Dublin Society drawing schools under Robert West. While there he coloured prints and in 1747 he won a prize in the examination. He became a friend of Edmund Burke, then a student at Trinity College, Dublin and by tradition it was Burke who introduced him to the wild scenery of the Dargle valley and the Powerscourt estate. In 1761 Barret moved to London where he had moderate success as a painter of estate views and idealised landscapes. By the date of the present powerful view of Ullswater, Barret had fallen on hard times and the following year Burke helped secure his appointment as Master Painter to the Chelsea Hospital.

This view of Ullswater was made on a tour of the Lake District; in at least one other picture from this trip to be recorded. In 1780 Barret exhibited at the Royal Academy a View of Windermere Lake, in Westmoreland, the effect, the sun beginning to appear in the morning, with the mist breaking and dispersing.

(10, 40). A gouache of a similar view of Ullswater now in the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin was the source for an engraving by Samuel Middiman for Select Views in Great Britain. Barret has included an elegant group of figures enjoying a picnic on Soulby-Fell on the right of the composition, a ferry transports more tourists and their horses across the lake to the base of this hill. Tourism to the Lakes was gaining in popularity during the last decades of the century to the extent that it formed a subject for Wordsworth’s scorn in The Brothers published in 1800.

Barret usually worked in oil, but here is working in gouache, a medium which by this date was losing ground in popularity to watercolour. Rather than concentrating on the naturalism of the view, Barret has focused on the monumental grandeur and effects of light, emphasising the unreal qualities of sublime landscape. Painted at the end of a tradition of gouache painting which had begun with Marco Ricci in Britain, this remarkably well preserved and monumental view represents an unexpected combination of carefully structured topography and sublimity and ranks as perhaps the finest example of a landscape in gouache executed in Britain at the period.

NOTES
Francis Towne was a British painter known for his watercolor landscapes, particularly those of Italy. One of his works, "Lake Albano," is a vivid depiction of the lake surrounded by trees and buildings, capturing the evening light filtering through the foliage. Towne's technique, which involved using monochrome washes and handling the watercolor medium with great skill, is evident in this piece. His approach was notable for its clarity and focus on the general shapes and masses of buildings and vegetation, reflecting a time when landscape painting was becoming a popular genre.

In the summer of 1781, Towne traveled to Rome, where he produced a series of watercolors that showcased his technical virtuosity. These works, including "Lake of Albano/Evening Sun behind the trees on the left/hand/july the 10th 1781/Francis Towne," were praised for their realistic depiction of light and shadow. Towne's ability to render the Italian landscape with precision and clarity was admired by his contemporaries, including Thomas Jones, who wrote in 1776 about his visit to Lake Albano:

"This walk considered with respect to its classic locality, the Awful marks of the modern Specimens of Art, and the various extensive & delightful prospects it commands is, to the Scholar, naturalist, Antiquarian and Artist, without doubt, The most pleasing and interesting in the Whole World – And here I can not help observing with what new and uncommon Sensations I was filled on my first traversing this beautiful and picturesque Country – Every scene seemed anticipated in some dream – It appeared Magick Land."

The idea of the landscape of the Roman Campagna being a place of new and exciting views and simultaneously familiar is something consistently commented upon by travellers in the eighteenth century. For Jones and Towne, Lake Albano, fringed by the towns of Castel Gandolfo and Albano, would have been 'anticipated' in the works of the seventeenth-century painters, Claude and Gaspard Dughet, as well as the pictures of Richard Wilson and their own contemporaries. Towne would therefore have been aware of the landscape he was painting, as well as the artistic heritage it held.

Collections:
- Francis Towne;
- James White (1724–1810), Easter, by bequest from the above in 1816;
- John Herman Merivale (1759–1844), Barton Place, Easter, by reversion as residuary legatee on White’s death in 1816;
- Maria Sophia Merivale (1793–1828) and Judith Ann Merivale (1801–1848), grand-daughters of the above, Oxford, by descent May 1825;

LITERATURE:
- Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Three Exeter Artists of the Eighteenth Century, exh. cat., Exeter, Festival of Britain, 1951, no.188.
- Exeter Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Three Exeter Artists of the Eighteenth Century, Festival of Britain, 1951, no.188.
have approached this new landscape with a number of compositional preconceptions. Towne chose a conventional position for the present view. Seated on the Galleria di Sopra, the road that runs around Lake Albano, looking west across the lake towards the town of Castel Gandolfo and Rome beyond. This was a celebrated view made by numerous visiting British artists, including Jones but most spectacularly and numerously by John Robert Cozens. But rather than showing the distinctive dome of Bernini’s San Tommaso in Castel Gandolfo and the sweeping line of the lake, Towne has focused on the evening light falling through the trees. The woods which fringed the lakes of Albano and Nemi evidently appealed to Towne as he executed a number of exceptionally compelling studies of trees in the area. A grey and black wash drawing inscribed ‘Taken in a wood near Albano’ is in the Oppé collection in the Tate and other drawings show chestnut trees in the woods around Rocca di Papa, a village on the hills above Lake Albano. In both the Rocca di Papa views and the Albano view Towne switched from using the brown washes he had been employing in Rome, back to the cooler grey tones he had used before his departure for the Continent. One explanation for Towne’s interest in the woods of the Castelli Romani and the number of studies he made on his tour of the lakes in July 1781 might have been the scarcity of trees in Rome itself. Contemporaries frequently commented on the barren landscape and the poor quality of the agricultural land close to the city. It may also be that Towne felt less pressure to draw, what Jones called, ‘the Awful marks of the modern Specimens of Art’ – Bernini’s churches at Castel Gandolfo and Ariccia – than the antiquities of classical Rome and therefore concentrate on studies of trees and the bright Italian summer light rather than the specific landmarks of his views. Towne did make other views of Albano which are closer in spirit and topographical specificity to the more traditional views of Castel Gandolfo. A large, coloured panorama of Lake Albano is preserved in the Towne albums in the British Museum. But in the present drawing Towne is principally interested in the quality of the evening light falling through the trees. Towne has used only minimal drawn lights to create the setting, profiling the outlines of the trees and suggesting the receding hills in the background; the rest of the sheet is created using carefully controlled washes. The alternating shadows and shafts of light are evoked solely with different strengths of grey wash giving a strong sense of design to Towne’s composition. Towne noted on the reverse of the drawing that he painted an oil version of the subject for James Curtis who also ordered a view of Ulysses. According to Richard Stephens, Curtis was a brewer and merchant of Old South Sea House, Broad Street, London, who was an executive and leading beneficiary of the will of Towne’s long-standing acquaintance Samuel Edwards. It is interesting that he should have commissioned a pair of views of the two adjacent towns, Ariccia and Albano, suggesting that despite the limited topographical appeal of the present view, it was still an effective evocation of the ‘Magick land’ of Grand Tour Italy. The present drawing passed along with many of his other works in 1816 to his friend James White of Exeter, on whose death it passed to Towne’s residuary legatee John Herman Merivale. Sold by Merivale’s descendants it belonged to the distinguished collector Leonard Duke in the beginning of the twentieth century. The present drawing demonstrates the artistic innovation of Towne’s continental work, with its subtle use of light, monochrome palette and sense of design it is a powerful example of his response to the Italian landscape.

We are very grateful to Richard Stephens for his help with the provenance of the present drawing and for sharing his research on James Curtis.

NOTES
Thomas Rowlandson was one of the most vibrant and dextrous draughtsmen of the eighteenth century and this large sheet is one of his finest works of satire. The composition presents a compendium of caricature heads that fascinated Rowlandson throughout his career, pressing their attention on a beautiful young woman. The title, Animal Magnetism, is an allusion to a contemporary scientific theory and anchors this drawing in contemporary satire of the 1780s.

The title of this drawing refers to the popular theories of a German doctor, Franz Mesmer. Mesmer published his theory of ‘Animal Magnetism’ which posulated the existence of an invisible natural force exerted by animals. He believed that the force could have physical effects, including healing. Mesmer and his followers believed that the world was filled with ‘fluid matter’
the ostrich feather headdress reappearing in numerous drawings of models, attractive and celebrity women, for example the Opera Singers in the Yale Center for British Art. The admirers represent the full kaleidoscope of figures Rowlandson satirized in his drawings, from the idealized youth on the left which is frequently read as a form of self-portrait, to the rubicund old man with bulbous nose and glasses in the bottom right. The topic was one designed to appeal to Rowlandson, who frequently explored the animalistic qualities of humans in the albums he produced entitled: Studies in Comparative Anatomy, Resemblances between the Countenances of Men and Beasts. Rowlandson’s literal interpretation of Mesmer’s term is demonstrated in the physiognomies of some of the admirers, for example the figure in the bottom left which appears distinctly porcine in his features.

which ‘as all the bodies moving in the world, abound with pores, this fluid matter introduc- es itself through the interstices and returns backwards and forwards, flowing through one body by the currents which issue there from another, as in a magnet.’ Adherents of the theory suggested that this ‘fluid matter’ needed to be in equilibrium, any imbalance caused illness, which could be treated with a form of hypnotism. The most successful mesmerist in London was J. B. Mainauduc, who had purchased a medical degree after study with William Hunter. Many fashionable patients were ‘Mesmerized’ including Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire who was thrown into hysterics by the experience, Lady Salisbury who was put to sleep and the Prince of Wales.

As both popularity and skepticism increased, many became convinced that animal magnetism could lead to sexual exploitation of women. Not only did the practice involve close personal contact via the waving of hands over the body, but people were concerned that the animal magnetists could hypnotize women and direct them at will. The playwright Elizabeth Inchbald wrote the farce Animal Magnetism in 1788 in which she parodied mesmerism; in it the ‘doctor’ affirms that he can, if he pleases, make every woman who comes near him fall in love with him.

In this drawing Rowlandson neatly inverts this fear. Rather than the mesmeric doctor exploiting the defenseless woman, Rowlandson shows a voluptuous and fashionably dressed woman at the center of a male throng evidently exerting her own ‘animal magnetism’ over her male admirers. The ‘center of attention’ recalls Rowlandson’s depictions of famous actresses of the day.

NOTES

1 Wonders and mysteries of animal magnetism displayed, or the history, art, practice, and progress of that useful science, from its first rise in the city of Paris, to the present time. With several Curious Cases and new Anecdotes of the Principal Professors, London, 1791, pp. 10–11.
JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER RA 1775–1851

The Road between Caserta and the Aqueduct

Watercolour with traces of pencil
5 7/8 x 9 1/8 inches · 150 x 232 mm
Painted c. 1794–5

Collections
The Ven. Archdeacon Charles Burney by 1887, (d. 1907);
Messes M. and J. Burney, by descent;
Thomas Agnew & Sons, 1991;
Private collection, acquired from the above, to 2014.

Remarked
London, Royal Academy, Works by the Old Masters, Winter 1887, (ex-catalogue);
London, Agnew’s, 26th Annual Exhibition of English Watercolours and Drawings, 1991, no. 671;

This finely executed and well preserved watercolour by Turner offers important evidence of his fascination with earlier British artists, particularly the works of the pioneering watercolourist John Robert Cozens. Almost certainly painted while Turner had access to works by Cozens belonging to the physician and collector Dr Thomas Monro, it also demonstrates how important Italy was to Turner even before his first visit in 1799.

In 1794 Turner entered the schools of the Royal Academy where he drew from casts after the antique and from life models. However, landscape and topographical drawing and painting were not taught at the Academy, and in this vital area Turner was in many ways his own teacher, except for the encouragement and help provided by Dr Thomas Monro at his informal ‘academy’. Monro, a physician who specialized in mental disorders, was a considerable collector and amateur artist who from about 1794 encouraged young artists to visit his house in the Adelphi to copy from drawings in his collection, many of them by Cozens, who spent the last years of his life in the doctor’s care. Turner’s close contemporary and friend Thomas Girtin was among his fellow students at the Adelphi.1 Our most detailed information about the Monro academy comes from the diary of Joseph Farington, who first mentioned it in December 1794 and then recorded on 12 November 1798 that: Turner & Girtin told us that they had been employed by Dr. Monro 3 years to draw at his house in the evenings … Turner afterwards told me that Dr. Monro had been a material friend to him, as well as to Girtin.2

The present work is, with variations, based on a much larger watercolour by John Robert Cozens, now in the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester. Cozens visited Italy for the second time with the great patron and collector William Beckford in 1782–3 when they made an extensive tour in the South of the country. Beckford and Cozens visited in November 1782 and a pencil study for the watercolour is preserved in the Beckford sketchbooks in the Whitworth.3 At Monro’s Academy young artists were encouraged to use works in his collection as the basis for their own works. A number of wash and watercolour drawings by Turner exist to testify to his fascination with Cozens and these range from very loose approximations of Cozens’s compositions to more closely observed exercises replicating the structures of Cozens’s watercolours. They are, however, never direct copies in the conventional sense as Turner always used them as a base to express his own very different artistic voice. In the present work Turner carefully approximated Cozens’s treatment of the view particularly in the construction of the foreground and receding landscape albeit on a considerably smaller scale, underlining his mastery of the developing technique of watercolour of which he, even at an early stage was the master. Whilst Cozens’s interest in the view was to emphasize the dramatic almost theatrical aspects of the view, Turner, by reducing the format of the composition found in the Cozens, placed more emphasis on the mountains in the distance.

Notes
3 Francis Haverscroft, Travels in Italy, 1791–1795, based on the Memoirs of Thomas Jones, exh. cat.Manchester (Whitworth Art Gallery), 1988, no. 86.
Lawrence’s early biographer D.E. Williams observed that Lawrence: made, however, but two or three drawings in the Academy, which were executed with a black-lead pencil on white paper, skilfully toned down, till the high light had the effect of white put on, rather than of the paper left; a style at that time novel, or at least not practised in the school. Two drawings of the Gladiator Repellens, and of the Sabre-armed Apollo, were deemed very accurate and beautiful.1

The first Academician made surprisingly few rules governing the education of students, other than the requirement that a student have a drawing or model approved for admission and again to progress into the Life Academy. Students were admitted for a term of six years, this was later altered to seven years and then ten. But this was in no way regarded as the duration of a course of study but merely a statement of eligibility to use the Academy’s facilities and to compete for prizes. The insurmountable hurdle was fairly minimal, following the traditional model in which the purpose of an Academy was to provide instruction in draughtsmanship and theory while the student learned their chosen art of painting, sculpture or architecture with a master. The Antique or Plaster Academy was open from 9am to 3pm with a 2 hour session in the evening. The Life Academy, however, consisted of only a 2 hour class each night.

This drawing seems likely to have been made from a posed model in the Life Academy in Somerset House. The Visitor would set the model and Lawrence would have studied under a number of Academician including Henry Fuseli and James Barry. There was a long tradition in European academies of posing the model to emulate a piece of classical sculpture. When J.M.W. Turner became Visitor in 1812 he became famous for this practice. Redgrave recorded that Turner ‘when a visitor in the life school he introduced a capital practice, which it is to be regretted has not been continued: he chose for study a model as nearly as possible corresponding in form and character with some fine antique figure, which he placed by the side of the model posed in the same action.’ This was likely to have been happening earlier as the present drawing shows a model posed as the Crouching Venus, or Vénus Accroupie a sculpture in the Louvre. Unlike the technique described by Williams, Lawrence has used the classic method of tres crayons, adding red to black and white chalk to capture the flesh tones. Lawrence was to refine this use of red highlighting in the sophisticated portrait drawings that became an occasional feature of his mature career.

NOTES
1 The present drawing is related to a pair of studies by Lawrence of the same model seen from slightly different angles; the drawings were purchased from Lawrence’s posthumous sale in 1793 by Sir Charles Greville and sold by his descendants at Sotheby’s 5 April, 1873, lots 85.
2 D.E. Williams, The Life and Correspondence of Sir Thomas Lawrence, London, 1891, t. p. 99
3 D.E. Williams, The Life and Correspondence of Sir Thomas Lawrence, London, 1932, t. p. 99
JOHN FLAXMAN RA 1755–1826

**Orestes Standing over the Bodies of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus**

Pencil, strengthened with ink
8 x 11 ½ inches · 203 x 292 mm
Drawn c.1795

**Collections**
- Thomas Hope, acquired from the artist; Lord Francis Hope Pelham-Clinton-Hope by descent, 1917; Pelham-Clinton-Hope sale, Humbert & Flint, 1917; Scott & Fowles, New York by 1918; Private collection, USA.

**Literature**

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JOHN FLAXMAN RA 1755–1826

**Oceanus and Prometheus Bound**

Pencil, strengthened with ink
9 x 11 ¼ inches · 229 x 285 mm
Signed ‘J Flaxman’ (pasted on border, lower right)
Drawn c.1795

**Collections**
- Thomas Hope, acquired from the artist; Lord Francis Hope Pelham-Clinton-Hope by descent, 1917; Pelham-Clinton-Hope sale, Humbert & Flint, 1917; Scott & Fowles, New York by 1918; Private collection, USA.

**Literature**
Flaxman chose scenes from all surviving plays by Aeschylus, placing the emphasis on Prometheus. The first drawing shows Oceanus arriving to placate Prometheus. Flaxman designed a classical river god close in type to the Roman sculpture of a River god from the Museo Capitolino, with Oceanus’s legs neatly encircled by the animal’s tail. The continuous sequence of curves formed by the heart’s neck, belly and tail create a surface pattern which is both elegant and in deliberate contrast to the jarring lines of the struggling Prometheus. August Wilhelm von Schlegel writing on Flaxman in 1799 regarded the illustrations to Aeschylus as his greatest works, particularly admiring his plate of Oceanus, which he noted: ‘looks so marvellous that one does not ask if the poet’s intention is being pursued, where in fact the animal is a four-footed bird.’ 4 The first drawing shows Prometheus standing on the plate of Oceanus, which he noted: ‘looks so marvellous that one does not ask if the poet’s intention is being pursued, where in fact the animal is a four-footed bird.’ 4 The second drawing depicts Orestes standing over the bodies of his mother Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, the man who had murdered his father, Agamemnon and seduced his mother. The stark linearity recalls Greek vase painting and the primitive quality of the post-impressionists have temporarily blinded us to obvious beauty.’ 5 It was evidently a commercial success and numerous Flaxman drawings entered distinguished private and public collections. Scott & Fowles donated three to the Metropolitan Museum of Art who had acquired a further three and would be given a fourth in 1952.

Notes

The Virgin Hushing the Young John the Baptist

William Blake's exceptional painting of The Virgin Hushing the Young John the Baptist comes from a series of fifty paintings commissioned in 1799 by Blake's most significant patron, Thomas Butts. This small work survives in remarkable condition; unlike the majority of Blake's paintings in tempera which have suffered severe deterioration. In this series Blake used a glue-based watercolour medium, and the fact that the present work was painted directly onto paper rather than on canvas or copper like the majority of the others helped to keep it stable. The striking, sinuousness of the composition and the eccentric interpretation of the subject-matter offer perfect illustrations of Blake's conceptual and technical inventiveness and his fascination with design. Only about thirty of the Butts pictures survive and only a handful remain in private collections making this one of the most important and best preserved of Blake's paintings to appear in recent years.

Thomas Butts was a clerk in the office of the Commissary General of Musters and would become a consistent and important patron of Blake. As Gilchrist noted:

"One consistent patron there was ... without his friendly constancy, even less would have remain to show the world, or a portion of it, what manner of man Blake was. I mean Mr. Thomas Butts, whose long friendship with Blake commenced at this period. For nearly thirty years he continued (with few interruptions) a steady buyer at moderate prices of Blake's drawings, temperas, and frescoes; the only large buyer the artist ever had. Occasionally he would take of Blake a drawing a week. So, in this way, often supplied the imaginative man with the bare means of subsistence when no others existed – at

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Pen and ink and oil on paper on linen, laid down on canvas
10 ⅝ x 15 inches · 270 x 380 mm
Signed with monogram and dated 1799 (lower left)

collections
Thomas Butts, commissioned from the artist;
Thomas Butts, Jr., son of the above;
Francis Turner Palgrave, by 1865;
Edward William Hooper, Cambridge, Massachusetts, by 1880;
Mrs. John Briggs Potter, daughter of the above;
Mrs. John B. Swan, daughter of the above;
Warren Howell, 1975;
Private collection, USA, 1977 to 2015.

LITERATURE
Geoffrey Keynes, William Blake's Illustrations to the Bible, London 1957, p.112, no.921;

EXHIBITED
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Drawings, Water Colors, Old Engravings by William Blake, June 1880, no.241;
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Print Department, Books, Water Colors, Engravings, Exh. by William Blake, February-March 1891, no.12;
New Haven, Yale Center for British Art & Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, William Blake: His Art and Times, 1982–83, no.70;
Tokyo, National Museum of Western Art, William Blake, 1990, no.49;

William Blake


William Blake The Nativity, 1799–1801. Tempera on canvas. 11 1/2 x 7/16 inches. 293 x 159 mm. "Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. William Thomas Tonner, 1964 (79.50.1)."


all events from his art. All honour to the solitary artist, and to his zealous continuance! At years old by. Mr. Blake’s house in Finsbury Square became a perfect Blake Gallery.1

The perfect ‘Blake Gallery’ contained the fifty illustrations to the Bible as well as over twenty watercolours of Biblical Subjects.2 Butts paid Blake steadily for pictures and commissions as a ‘Miracle’, writing that he held in his hand. Jesus has just fallen asleep, after the Virgin has read to him, and she admonishes John to be silent. Her outstretched finger at the same time points in the direction of another butterfly in the sky. Rather than being a Biblical episode, the subject-matter relates to a passage in Apostholical writing, but as David Bindman has pointed out it was a subject-matter familiar in Italian Renaissance painting, known as the ‘Madonna del Silenzio’.3 As such it belongs to a group of Blake’s paintings which have Marion iconography and look towards Italian old master’s for their subject-matter and inspiration.

The most famous ‘Madonna del Silenzio’ is the work from Raphael’s studio The Madonna of the Blue Diadem now in the Louvre. The painting was well known in Britain through numerous engravings and the composition, as well as the subject-matter, seems to have influenced Blake. The Louvre painting shows the Virgin, head inclined, arm outstretched, with the Christ child asleep and a mountainous landscape beyond. Raphael’s composition has traditionally been read as a meditation on the theme of Christ’s future sacrifice, which is alluded to by the shroud-like cloth on which he sleeps. The Virgin’s action in silencing the infant St John has been read as cautioning him not to awaken Christ to his Passion before his time. Blake may have been aware of the painting of the same theme by Annibale Carracci, in the Royal Collection which was engraved by Francesco Bartolozzi. Blake’s reliance on Renaissance and Baroque paintings as both an iconographic and visual resource has not been fully explored. But it seems that other paintings designed for Butts respond to earlier masters. Martin Butlin has pointed out that the subject-matter of The Christ Child Asleep or A Coz may derive from a painting by Guido Reni which was visible in London at the sale of the Orleans collection in 1764.5 David Bindman has suggested that the figure of Christ is related to the pose of Michelangelo’s lost sculpture of a Sleeping Cupid probably created in the 15th century but echoed in later representations.6 Blake has, therefore, drawn together and absorbed a whole range of references to earlier art, as he himself said in the same year, his figures were ‘those of Michael Angelo, Rafael & the Antike, & of the best living Models’.7 Such a considered use of Renaissance and Baroque sources gives Blake’s compositions a grandeur despite its modest size.

The theme of the passion and resurrection is further alluded to by Blake’s masterpiece the ‘Madonna of the Blue Diadem’, painted in 1799. Blake was sensitive to the technique, is closest to the works of early Italian painting. From the 1770s British collectors and patrons had begun to consider and acquire early Italian paintings. Blake’s friend and supporter, the sculptor John Flaxman, had spent a great deal of time on his Grand Tour drawing thirteenth and fourteenth century sculpture, paintings and frescoes, consistently praising the qualities of simplicity and grandeur in early Italian art.8 In Italy Flaxman had met the young artist William Young Ottley who made a series of drawings of early Italian paintings which he would eventually publish in 1790 but which must have been known to Flaxman and Blake. The immediacy of The Virgin Hushing the Young John the Baptist, the bold mass of the Virgin, the simplicity and grandeur of her drapery and emphatic gesture accord with the strength of design Flaxman and Ottley discovered in the works of early Italian painting. As David Bindman has suggested it may well be that in Blake’s so-called tempera works, Blake ‘was concerned with finding a way of preserving the linear clarity of watercolor without losing the density of oil painting’.9

[ 66 ]
Blake decided to use tempera rather than oil to execute these works also: perhaps reflects his interest in early Italian painting, Blake after all referred to the technique as 'fresco'. We have a very detailed expression of the process given by the engraver and antiquarian, J. T. Smith. Blake’s makes for preparing his ground, and laying it over his panels for painting, mixing his colours, and manner of working, were those which he considered to have been practiced by the earliest fresco-painters, whose productions still remain, in numerous instances, vivid and permanently fresh. His ground was a mixture of whitewash and plaster, which he passed over several times in thin coatings: his colours to ground himself, and also thinned with the same sort of glue, but in a much weaker state. He would, in the course of painting a picture, pass a very thin transparent wash of glue-water over the whole of the parts he had worked upon, and then proceed to pass a very thin transparent wash of glue-water over the whole of the parts he had worked upon, and then proceed with his finishing.15

Although Blake never visited Italy he must have been aware of the fresco fragments which entered British collections during the eighteenth century.16 Sadly the result of Blake’s experimental technique is that his works for Butts tend not to be very stable. A survey of the six tempera paintings by William Blake that still remain in private hands shows that they have mostly severe condition problems.17 The Virgin Hushing the Young John the Baptist is one of the most impressive of the Butts series. This highly impressive, concentrated work is an exceptional distillation of Blake’s vision as both a poet and painter. In the Butts commission, Blake was offered the freedom to explore biblical scenes with his unique imagination. In the present work he produced an outstanding image of motherly love and childhood innocence, infused by the wondrous concerns of the Passion and Christ’s sacrifice. The playful and innovative addition of the butterfly points to Blake’s pictorial reading of traditional iconography. Stylistically the canvas shows Blake’s profound interest in early Italian painting, the grandeur of the Virgin and bold mass of the red drapery all point to his knowledge of early Florentine frescos. Something also represented by the innovative technique Blake explored in its preservation, imaginative conceptualisation and beauty, this small picture is one of the most significant works by Blake to come on the market in recent years.

NOTES
5 David Bindman, Blake as an Artist, Oxford, 1977, pp.114–120.
8 David Bindman, Blake as an Artist, Oxford, 1977, p.110.
11 David Bindman, Blake as an Artist, Oxford, 1977, p.11.
13 Charles Townley for example, owned a number of fresco-fragments by the fourteenth-century painter Spinello Aretino which would have been visible in his house at 7 Park Street. They are now in the National Gallery.
16 David Bindman, Blake as an Artist, Oxford, 1977, pp.114–120.
Writing after the untimely death of Thomas Girtin in 1802, W. H. Pyne, an early chroni-
cler of the development of British water-
colour painting, observed:

[Girtin’s] views of many of our cities, towns, 
castles, cathedrals, etc. were treated by his pencil 
in a manner entirely his own; a depth of 
shadow, a brilliance of light, and a magical splendour of 
colours characterised his drawings, and displayed 
a vigour of inherent genius that promised to raise 
the art [of watercolour] to the highest summit of 
excellence.1

Pyne communicates something of the 
tonal brilliance of Girtin’s work which still 
marks it out as singular. Girtin was born 
the same year as Turner and followed a 
similar early trajectory. Both artists worked 
in the informal ‘academy’ established by the

amateur artist and physician Dr Thomas 
Monro – their work from this period often 
being nearly indistinguishable. Whilst 
working with Monro Girtin was exposed 
to the work of John Robert Cozens who 
was celebrated for producing watercolours 
where mood and form were the central 
narrative element. It was this quality which 
Girtin developed in his own mature works, 
eschewing simple topography, he imbued 
his landscape watercolours with a power, 
dignity and solemnity which pointed to the 
new possibilities of the medium; his greatest 
works suggest an emotional response to 
landscape which is parallel to, but distinct 
from, that of Turner. Our watercolour 
extecuted on a typically panoramic format 
dates from early 1799 to his early 
death at the age of twenty-seven in 1802.

The present watercolour owes something 
to Cozens in its depth of tone, but Girtin’s 
colouring is more sonorous than Cozens, 
something which has been attributed to his 
interest in Flemish landscape.2 By the date of 
the present watercolour Girtin had rejected 
the prevailing approach to watercolour 
of transparent washes over pencil lines in 
favour of rich surface effects. His sombre 
colouring suggests a desire to rival oil 
painting, to achieve the same kind of depth 
and mellowness of varnished oil paints with 
translucent watercolours.

Depicting the bridge at Wetherby on 
the river Wharfe, Girtin’s view dates from 
one of the trips to Yorkshire he made from 
1796. Girtin had a number of patrons in the 
north of England including Edward 
Lancelles of Harewood House who 
purchased a number of local views and 
hoped to promote Girtin over Turner in the

collections 
Francis W. Keen; 
C. A. Keen; 
Keen sale, Sotheby’s, 20 April 1972, lot 97; 
Edward Fremantle, 1972; 
Robert Tear, acquired 1976, to 2011; 
And by descent, 2014

literature 
David Hill, Thomas Girtin, Genius in the 
North, exh. cat., York (Harewood 
House), 1972, p.41, no.42; 
Greg Smith (ed.), Thomas Girtin: The Art 

exhibited 
Leeds, Harewood House, Thomas Girtin, 
Genius in the North, 1992, no.22; 
London, Tate Britain, Thomas Girtin: The Art 
of Watercolour, 2012, no.139.

1 W. H. Pyne, Observations on the 
Art and Literature of the Times, 
London, 1820, p.192.

2 Greg Smith, ‘Thomas Girtin in 
the North’, in David Hill (ed.), 
Thomas Girtin: The Art of 
Watercolour, exh. cat., London (Tate), 2002, 
p.163.
The same year Girtin painted the bridge at Harewood which was only a few miles upstream of Wetherby confirming his interest in the picturesque qualities of the stone bridges on the Wharfe. The survival of a pencil study for this view formerly in the collection of Edward Lascelles may suggest that Girtin was planning to sell the finished watercolour to his most constant Yorkshire patron.

Wetherby was not a popular destination for artists – although Turner did sketch there in 1816 – but Girtin seemed to have understood its picturesque potential. At this date the bridge carried the Great North Road across the river, and the town was an important market and posting centre and some of the inn buildings can be made out beyond the mills. The present view looks from the south bank of the river across the west to Wetherby mills and bridge. In the present watercolour Girtin has shown work being carried out to the west in front of the bridge with three figures working to repair damage on the weir where a cart and spade are also visible. David Hill has suggested that this was the result of the heavy flooding which occurred in the winter of 1799 and this would accord with a dating of this watercolour on stylistic grounds to 1800. Another view of the bridge which survives in two versions, a more dramatic treatment of the bridge is in the British Museum, it shows a view looking east, perhaps from the west, through the bridge’s arches towards more cottages and a mill. Although Girtin’s use of unstable indigo pigment has resulted in a change of the overall colour balance – the grey of the sky, depth of shadows and water have been effected – this sheet retains a harmonious beauty whilst demonstrating a breadth and ambition that are testament to its importance to Girtin during the very short period of his artistic maturity. A detailed pencil study survives in the Bacon collection, although Girtin seems unusually not to have made any repetitions.

The present watercolour was first recorded in the collection of Francis W. Keen, a director of Guest, Keen & Nettlefold, who was a significant collector of British watercolours and also owned Girtin’s Morpeth Bridge now in the Laing Art Gallery. The same year Girtin painted the bridge at Harewood which was only a few miles upstream of Wetherby confirming his interest in the picturesque qualities of the stone bridges on the Wharfe. The survival of a pencil study for this view formerly in the collection of Edward Lascelles may suggest that Girtin was planning to sell the finished watercolour to his most consistent Yorkshire patron.

Wetherby was not a popular destination for artists – although Turner did sketch there in 1816 – but Girtin seemed to have understood its picturesque potential. At this date the bridge carried the Great North Road across the river, and the town was an important market and posting centre and some of the inn buildings can be made out beyond the mills. The present view looks from the south bank of the river across the west to Wetherby mills and bridge. In the present watercolour Girtin has shown work being carried out to the west in front of the bridge with three figures working to repair damage on the weir where a cart and spade are also visible. David Hill has suggested that this was the result of the heavy flooding which occurred in the winter of 1799 and this would accord with a dating of this watercolour on stylistic grounds to 1800. Another view of the bridge which survives in two versions, a more dramatic treatment of the bridge is in the British Museum, it shows a view looking east, perhaps from the west, through the bridge’s arches towards more cottages and a mill. Although Girtin’s use of unstable indigo pigment has resulted in a change of the overall colour balance – the grey of the sky, depth of shadows and water have been effected – this sheet retains a harmonious beauty whilst demonstrating a breadth and ambition that are testament to its importance to Girtin during the very short period of his artistic maturity. A detailed pencil study survives in the Bacon collection, although Girtin seems unusually not to have made any repetitions.

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JOHN CRANCH 1751–1821

Interior of a Dovecote

Oil on panel
11 ½ x 10 ⅛ inches · 290 x 257 mm
Signed ‘J. Cranch’ (lower right)  Painted c. 1800

This charming interior view of a dovecote is by John Cranch, a little known but fascinating painter who is best remembered for his contact with the young John Constable. The lamp-lit interior shows Cranch’s interest in Dutch painters, such as Teniers and his fascination with the activities of rural life. Cranch’s naturalism and interest in subjects beyond the normal range of academic history painting had an important early impact on the young John Constable, who met him with J.T. Smith at Edmonton in 1796. It was this meeting which convinced the young Constable to pursue a career as a painter and Cranch’s guidance, both practical and theoretical, had a profound influence on Constable’s development as an artist.

Cranch was born at Kingsbridge, Devon, on 12 October 1751. Little is known of his life prior to the exhibition of his first painting at the Society of Artists in 1791, Burning of the Albion Mill, when his address was given as 1 Old Broad Street, London. He seems to have largely self-taught, although he may have received some instruction from a Catholic priest while a clerk at Axminster. Cranch preferred rural genre themes, exemplified by Monks with a Lantern in a Moonlit Landscape of about 1795 and now in the Louvre, Paris, which recalls the lighting effects of Joseph Wright of Derby. Cranch was a close friend of the engraver, draughtsman and drawing master John Thomas Smith, and the two men played an influential role in the development of the young John Constable.

Constable met Smith and Cranch when engaged on family business outside London - staying with his uncle Thomas Allen, a brewer – the two professional artists offered practical instruction which helped Constable improve his drawing skills, while Cranch encouraged his reading. Two of Constable’s earliest experiments in oil painting, The Albion Mill and The Oyster, show his stylistic debt to Cranch’s interior scenes. Constable himself described his early landscape, Moonlight Landscape with Hadleigh Church, in a letter to J.T. Smith: ‘I have lately painted a small moonlight in the manner or style of Cranch.’ Cranch’s importance to the young Constable is demonstrated by the survival of a remarkable document, a memorandum entitled Painter’s Reading, and hints or two respecting study. ‘This engaging list of publications was prepared by Cranch for the young Constable in September 1796 and includes a survey of literature for the aspiring painter. Cranch notes that Reynolds’s Discourses should be read with caution, as ‘they go’ he explains, ‘to establish an aristocracy in painting; they betray, and I believe have betrayed, many students into a concept of everything but grandeur and Michael Angelo: the first, and the splendid eloquence, with which the precepts are inculcated, makes us forget, that the truth of Teniers, and the wit and moral purpose of Hogarth, have been, and will for ever be at least as useful, and diffuse at least much pleasurers, as the mere sublimities of Juke and Raphael.’

For Cranch Reynolds’s hierarchy of painting was too restrictive, as he advised the young Constable to study ‘the general
Oliver Beckett noted that the present drawing by James Ward is:

… brushed in with enormous confidence and freedom, it exemplifies his mastery of a medium made their own by the distinguished circle of British water-colourists to whose genius Ward has paid such an eloquent tribute.

James Ward was a remarkably prolific and wide ranging artist, producing grand historical canvases as well as intimate, observational sketches. A free sketch of a sunset worked over in watercolour, with gouache and gum arabic, this drawing is a rare example of James Ward’s landscape colour studies. Not easily datable, this sheet seems unlikely to have been made in preparation for a larger composition — although sunsets form an important component in a number of Ward’s grand exhibition works – instead it represents a powerfully immediate response to an actual landscape. This immediacy places Ward’s drawing in the context of the explosion of *plein air* painting in European art around 1800.

Ward’s earliest paintings were dominated by the influence of George Morland, his brother-in-law although it was Peter Paul Rubens had the more lasting impact. As William Carey noted in 1809, Ward’s paintings were: ‘Not the School of Morland – but the resurrection of Rubens.’ It is Rubens, and particularly Rubens the landscape painter, who inflects much of Ward’s most celebrated work. But Ward’s interest in imitation did not prevent his fascination with drawing from nature. As several writers have observed, his earliest works were the impact of Thomas Girtin and it was assumed that he was a member of the ‘habitudes of men and things; or Nature, as she is more and less perverted by the social institutions.’ This cry for naturalism was one that Constable would echo throughout his career and work to emulate. Cranch exhibited only nine paintings during his lifetime, seven of which were shown at the 1808 British Institution exhibition. Cranch also published two treatises On the Economy of Testaments in 1794, and Incitations to promote the fine arts of Great Britain by exciting native genius to independent effort and original design in 1811. This rare panel of two figures in a Dovecote perfectly illustrates his style and the aspects of his painting which most appealed to the young Constable.

**JAMES WARD RA 1769–1859**

**Sunset**

Pencil and watercolour heightened with gouache and gum arabic

7 ¾ x 10 inches · 181 x 254 mm

Signed with initials ‘JWRA’ (lower right)

John Cranch, Plasterer, 1807

Oil on panel ª 5 ¾ x 6 ¼ inches · 146 x 159 mm

Signed

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

John Thomas Smith

John Cranch, 1795

Stipple, etching and engraving

8 ⅞ x 7 inches · 225 x 177 mm

© The Trustees of the British Museum

**NOTES**


of Girtin’s sketching society known as ‘the brothers’ although there is no proof that he ever worked with Girtin. Ward was member of another sketching society, one largely overlooked in the literature. In March 1804 Ward reported to Farington that:

> He & 5 other Artists... have for four years past been accustomed to meet once a week during the winter Season at each others Houses alternately to sketch and converse upon Art.2

This group is of particular interest as four of the six – Samuel Shelley, John Claude Nattes, Robert Hills and Henry Pyne – formed the Society of Painters in Water-colours the same year to give an alternative exhibition space in London for artists working in watercolour. Although they seem not to have painted en plein air, Ward frequently went on sketching trips with Robert Hills and both produced powerful on the spot landscape drawings. At the same moment in Rome a group of pensionnaires at the Académie de France à Rome were painting immediate studies from nature in the Italian landscape, artists such as Simon Denis, Pierre-Henri Valenciennes and François-Marius Granet. Ward’s bold, liquid drawing which captures in a few elemental brushstrokes both the visual sensation and feeling of a sunset is perfectly in tune with the studies being made in Rome.

The boldly handled sheet demonstrates both Ward’s facility as technician in watercolour and his ability to exploit the medium to create a work charged with energy and emotion. The romantic outlook is combined with a search for realistic truth; the careful pencil marks show Ward’s attempt to record the sky accurately. But ultimately Ward’s drawn details are subsumed and embodied in his large and poetic generalisation. Like his contemporaries working in Rome, sunsets feature prominently in Ward’s work – he places one in the background of his portrait of Napoleon’s horse Marengo painted in 1824 – sunsets were both spectacular and poetically suggestive. Despite the diminutive scale of the sheet, Ward is here as romantic as any of his larger exhibition machines.

NOTES

Lawrence has fortunately left a mass of evidence of his skill in drawing upon paper—and with it some surprises. As well as single, at one precise and lightly finished portrait drawings in chalk, he could produce occasional group portraits, seldom more ambitiously accomplished than in the trio of Lord Mornington’s daughters, casually yet elegantly seated on the ground, a group of contemporary Graces. The idiom of the composition is naturalistic, with emphasis strongest on the individual features of the three sisters, but in its overall concept, as in the grouping and the delicate play of line, there seems some hovering influence of Flaxman.

Michael Levey

Lawrence’s 1814 portrait of the nieces of the Duke of Wellington, The Wellesley-Pole Sisters, stands as one of the finest finished drawings of his maturity. Compositionally a highly sophisticated mediation of classical and Renaissance models, this delicate and highly finished work demonstrates the full weight of Lawrence’s sophistication as a draughtsman. Yet meticulously observed and complexly arranged portrait drawings such as this raise certain questions about Lawrence’s technique and the status of finished drawings at this key moment in his career.

A child prodigy, Thomas Lawrence was self-trained as a draughtsman and drew small portraits in pastels in Bath for three guineas each before moving to London in 1787. He continued to produce and exhibit spectacular finished drawings, including the highly wrought portrait of Mary Hamilton (British Museum) which was exhibited at the Academy in 1784. After
initial success on the walls of the Royal Academy, Lawrence became a full member of the Academy in 1794 at the age of 25 and by 1800 was considered the leading portrait painter in Britain. The ensuing decade saw him consolidate his position so that by 1814 he was at the height of his powers as a painter and on the eve of the most productive period of his career. With the Duke of Wellington’s victory at Waterloo and the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars, the Prince Regent commissioned Lawrence to complete a series of full-length portraits of the victorious allied commanders. The portrait of the Wellesley-Pole Sisters was drawn on the eve of the victory at Waterloo and perfectly demonstrates Lawrence’s compositional and technical sophistication. The choice of medium is perhaps less explicable, as by 1814 he had all but abandoned large-scale portrait drawings of this kind. Lawrence’s choice therefore demands some elucidation.

The sitters were Charlotte Anne, Emily Harriet and Priscilla Anne Wellesley-Pole, the daughters of William, 3rd Earl of Mornington, the Duke of Wellington’s eldest brother. The immediate impetus for the commission seems to have been the marriage in August 1814 of Emily Harriet to Lord Fitzroy Somerset. The present portrait seems likely to have been commissioned on the eve of Emily Harriet’s marriage as a memento of her siblings. Lawrence completed a portrait of Lady Emily in 1814 which he exhibited at the Royal Academy the same year and which is now in the Hermitage, St Petersburg. The commission of an intimate drawing of all three siblings was possibly prompted – if not initiated – by the Duke of Wellington himself.

Fitzroy Somerset was the Duke of Wellington’s military secretary and close confidante and the three sisters were all close to their uncle, with whom they were all staying in Paris later in 1814. Lawrence had already at this date painted a portrait of the Duke and more pertinently drawn an engaging portrait of his wife, Catherine Duchess of Wellington, for her sister, Mrs Henry Hamilton. As will be seen Wellington was conscious of Lawrence’s position as the pre-eminent artist in Britain and the importance of promoting British painting in the wake of Napoleon’s fall. Perhaps most compelling is the survival of a receipt in the archives at Stratfield Saye from Mary Smirke dated 25 May 1818 for a copy of the present drawing. Mary Smirke, the daughter of the painter Robert Smirke, was employed by Lawrence as a professional copyist, Wellington therefore owned a copy of the drawing which remains with his descendants at Stratfield Saye. This would suggest that the original drawing was at the very least admired by the duke, if not directly commissioned by him as a gift for Lady Fitzroy Somerset.

Shortly after the portrait was completed – October 1814 – Lawrence was corresponding with one of the sitters, Priscilla, Lady Burghesh, who was then in Paris staying with Wellington. Lady Burghesh wrote to Lawrence noting: ‘I have not failed to mention to Ld. Wellington your desire of showing the French your painting of Rolla, and he will be delighted to have a fine production of English art seen in his house, if its dimensions... will allow of its being placed there’, adding: ‘the Duke and I have fixed upon his dining-room as the best calculated to contain it, and he would admit all persons to see it... I have seen Mr Sir Thomas Lawrence
Mary Hamilton
Pencil and red and black chalk · 45.8 x 31.2 cm · 18 x 12 ¼ inches
Signed with monogram TL and dated 1789
© The Trustees of the British Museum
William Lock, who highly approves of your showing French artists that correctness of drawing is not exclusively their own.1 The portrait being referred to was Lawrence's full-length portrait of the actress John Philip Kemble at Coventry which had been exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1808. In a letter dated June 1813, the Duke of Wellington confirmed the offer adding: 'I will take care they [Lawrence's paintings] shall be paid in a situation to do them justice and to convince even the vain Panurge of the superiority of our English Artists.'2 The idea that Lawrence—so his supporters, Lady Buryghsell and his friend and patron William Lock is of Norbury—were concerned with demonstrating to French artists the 'correctness of drawing' is suggestive. While 'drawing' here referred to painting, it could well be that Lawrence was aware of the drawings of artists such as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, then living in Rome and producing finely rendered and carefully composed group portraits of British sitters in Rome. The stark modernity of Ingres's drawn portraits may well have prompt Lawrence to reconsider the medium.

Turning to the drawing itself, it is clear to see Lawrence's immediate visual stimulus was his own collection of old master drawings. The arrangement of Lady Emily Anne—interlocking, seated on her leg, her left hand holding her left foot—recalls the Virgin in Michelangelo's Transcendental drawing. In 1815 Lawrence finished his remarkable portrait of Isabella Wolff in the Art Institute of Chicago. The sitter is shown in a pose derived from Michelangelo's Erythraean Sibyl, whilst Wolff herself is depicted examining a book of drawings derived from Michelangelo. Whilst in The Wellesley-Pole sisters Michelangelo's weight and solemnity has been lightened his linear invention surely. Whilst there is a sense that three elegant young women, delicately articulated drawing; in stark linear neo-classicism in such a delicate number of copies of the individual heads, Elzabeta Renne has challenged the identification of the sitters, suggesting that the figure on the left is in fact Lady Emily Harriet Wellesley-Pole, rather than the central figure.6 Although it seems likely, given the initial owner of the drawing was Lady Emily Harriet, that she is the central figure and her physiognomy is entirely consistent with Lawrence's oil portrait of her made the same year.7 Lawrence's highly sophisticated and exquisitely rendered portrait of The Wellesley-Pole sisters demonstrates his extraordinary ability as a draughtsman. The boldness of conception and skill of execution show Lawrence working at the height of his powers at a moment when he was about to prove himself as one of the most inventive and intelligent portraitists in Europe. Drawing on the work of Michelangelo, Lawrence has created an ambitious and complex sheet which, as Michael Levy has suggested, celebrates the sitters as the modern day three graces.

8. Renne makes several unsustainable assertions about the present drawing, claiming it was drawn in 1814, despite it being dated 1815 and confirming it with Mary Smirke’s copy at Strawberry Hill which she reproduces as the original. See Elizaveta Renne, State Hermitage Museum Catalogue: Nineteenth Century British Painting, New Haven and London, 2011, no.65, pp.132–137.
Pencil and monochrome wash on paper 3 ⅞ x 5 inches · 97 x 127 mm
Now containing 88 leaves, variously signed and dated between 1814 and 1815 and some inscribed
Inscribed on the front cover: ‘A Sketch Book of Sir George Beaumont’s The gift of Lady Beaumont to ASB 1828’

COLLECTIONS
Margaret, Lady Beaumont, the artist’s widow; ASB, a gift from the above in 1828;
Private collection.

This sketchbook records a trip made by the great patron and amateur painter Sir George Beaumont from his house Coleorton Hall in Leicestershire to the Lake District in 1815. Beaumont was one of the outstanding figures to visit the Lake District, significantly contributing to its popularity amongst both professional painters and amateurs. The small, pocket-sized sketchbook contains a number of pencil and wash studies of landscapes around Borrowdale, Langdale and Brougham Castle, all made in September 1815. The studies offer an insight into Beaumont’s working practice, one that reflected the activities of the painters he knew and encouraged including Thomas Hickey, Joseph Farington and particularly John Constable.

Beaumont was educated at Eton College, where Alexander Cozens taught him drawing. This became his passion after a sketching holiday spent with his tutor, the Revd Charles Davy, the engraver William Woollett, and Woollett’s apprentice Thomas Hickey. While at New College, Oxford Beaumont joined the drawing master John Baptist Malchair on sketching expeditions. Through Oxford connections he met the painters who were to be his lifelong heroes, the landscapist Richard Wilson and the portraitist Sir Joshua Reynolds. Both nurtured his interest in the old masters: Wilson introduced him to the work of Claude Lorrain, and in 1792 Reynolds would bequeath him Sébastien Bourdon’s Return of the Ark, now held by the National Gallery in London.

Beaumont visited the Lake District throughout the 1790s forging a close friendship with a number of the Romantic poets resident in the area; William Wordsworth would remain a lifelong friend and correspondent. A remarkable drawing by Thomas Hickey depicting Beaumont and Joseph Farington sketching the waterfall at Lodore, Derwentwater, shows Beaumont working on plein air seated under an umbrella. Beaumont and Farington returned to the Lake District on numerous occasions over the next two decades and it is Farington who records in December 1816 a conversation with the painter William Owen who mentions the context of the present sketchbook:

‘Owen told me He had this day recd. a long letter from Sir George Beaumont with some gain. Sir George expatiated much on the beauties of the Scenery of the Lakes where He had lately passed three months, & He exorted Owen to go to that delightful Country.’

This almost certainly refers to the trip on which Beaumont completed the present sketchbook. Several of the views are annotated allowing us to reconstruct the trip which took him from Coleorton to Borrowdale, then south to Little Langdale where he made a sketch of Red Crag. Beaumont then moved east sketching along the Lowther River and at the ruins of Brougham Castle close to Penrith before concluding the sketchbook at Barnard Castle. He almost certainly met the Wordsworths at Grasmere. It was in 1815 that Wordsworth allowed Beaumont to contribute engravings from his own paintings to the Miscellaneous Poems and The White Doe.

The pencil and wash drawings contained in our sketchbook offer an evocative record of Beaumont’s trip to Cumberland and his love of ‘the beauties of the Scenery of the Lakes.’

NOTES
This fascinating woodland scene was unknown to Constable scholars until it recently, when it was recognized as being closely related to a similar, albeit smaller and more highly finished painting by the artist, Edge of a Wood c.1816 (fig.1). Both pictures seem to show the same stretch of Suffolk woodland, and both include a similar donkey with its foal as well as the same red cloaked figure collecting firewood. They are of particular interest in marking an intriguing moment in Constable’s mid-career when he had developed a more ‘finished’ style for his exhibition pictures, sometimes painted in the open air, and – in the case of these two works – also closely imitating the style and character of the work of his predecessor, fellow-Suffolk artist Thomas Gainsborough whose art he greatly admired.

John Constable was born in 1776 in the Suffolk village of East Bergholt, son of a prosperous corn and coal merchant, Golding Constable. In 1799 he embarked on his artistic training in London, entering the Royal Academy Schools, and by 1802 had become determined to specialise in landscape rather than the more lucrative or prestigious modes of portraiture or history painting. He also decided to concentrate on the rather unassuming Suffolk scenes he associated with his childhood in and around Dedham Vale, the village of East Bergholt and at Flatford on the river Stour where the family milling business was based. Constable was later to write that it was these scenes which ‘made him a painter’.

Until his marriage and permanent move to London in 1816, Constable would usually spend long summers at his parents’ house in East Bergholt, sometimes undertaking local commissions but more often sketching close to home, gathering new material for his exhibition canvases. He sometimes started work on these whilst still in Suffolk (in 1802 his father acquired the lease on a building in the village for Constable’s use as a studio) but would then refine and finish them in London over the winter, submitting them to the Academy exhibitions the following spring.

In the winter of 1815–16, however, Constable altered this practice. His mother had died earlier in the year and when in the autumn of 1815 his father also began to show signs of serious ill health, the artist decided to spend the entire winter in East Bergholt, with just the occasional visit to London. Rather than working in his studio on the High Street, it seems likely that Constable would have set up a painting room in the family house during this period so as to be close to his father, and indeed we know that two paintings he made earlier that summer, Golding Constable’s Flower Garden 1815 (Ipswich Museum and Art Galleries) and Golding Constable’s Kitchen Garden 1815 (both Ipswich Museum and Art Galleries) were painted by him from rooms at the back of East Bergholt House. It was presumably also here, in a room in the house, that during the winter of 1815–16 Constable worked on the two exhibition canvases he was to send in to the Academy exhibition the following year, A Wheatfield and A Wood: Autumn.

A Wheatfield, whose whereabouts was unknown to Constable scholars until 1988–9 and is now in the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, seems largely to have been painted by Constable on the spot during August and early September 1815, although certain elements – such as the figures and highly detailed plants and foliage in the foreground – would surely have been added later.

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by him in his painting room. The identifica-
tion of *A Wood: Autumn*, meanwhile, was
only made as recently as 2005 when *Edge
of a Wood* was re-dated to c.1815–16 (and
very plausibly suggested as the missing
still life exhibit *A Wood, Autumn*) following the
discovery by Jennifer Thompson of an oil
study of two donkeys in the Philadelphia
Museum of Art dated 29th Feb 1816 (fig.3)
closely related to those in the left-hand
foregrounds of the Toronto picture and the
present work, *Woodland Landscape*.

Constable only rarely painted autumn
landscapes. Indeed according to his
biographer C. R. Leslie, Constable once
placed a violin on a patch of green lawn
in his painting room. The immediate answer is that, untypically, he was
so much out, endeavouring to catch the last of
this beautiful year, that I have neglected
almost every other duty. Even as late as
3 December he told Maria in another letter
that the previous day had been ‘so very
mild that I went painting in the field from a
donkey that I wanted to introduce in a little
picture’—some three months, as it happens,
before he painted the study of donkeys
he was to use in *Edge of a Wood* (*A Wood:
Autumn*) and in *Woodland Landscape*.

There is, however, another good reason
why Constable might have chosen to paint
an autumn landscape at this particular
juncture in his life. He had always admired
the work of fellow landscapist Thomas
Gainsborough, and seems at this date still to
have favoured the artist’s early work based
on Dutch masters such as Ruisdael and
Hobbema and notable for its careful level of
finish. Indeed, there is one particular early
landscape by Gainsborough which Constable
knew well, the view of Cornard Wood, near
Sudbury, Suffolk (National Gallery, London;
fig.4) which his maternal uncle David Pike
Watts had acquired at some stage between
1808 and 1814, and which Constable would
often have seen when visiting his uncle at his
house in London, at Portland Place. Pike
Watts also lent *Cornard Wood* to the British
Institution in 1814 for a retrospective exhibi-
tion of the work of Gainsborough, Hogarth
and Wilson and Zoffany, an exhibition we
know Constable visited.

Indeed, it seems that Constable painted
his 1816 Academy exhibit, *Edge of a Wood
(A Wood, Autumn)*, together with its related
compositional study, *Woodland*, with
Gainsborough’s *Cornard Wood* uppermost
in his mind. Although, as Hugh Belsey points out, commentators neither new nor then seem to have highlighted the fact that Cornard Wood is an autumn scene, this is of course how viewers – including Pike Watts and Constable himself – would have interpreted it; not only is the foliage distinctly autumnal in colour but the figures heavily clothing foreword and sand are surely stocked up on supplies of these materials given winter is fast approaching. Constable’s inclusion of two donkeys at the left of both compositions, even though based on a sketch made from life, closely echo the two creatures in Cornard Wood, whilst the red-clad figure gathering firewood similarly echoes a figure tying up a bundle of twigs in Gainsborough’s picture on the left; this, same rather generalised and archaizing red-clad figure with black hat appears in Constable’s earlier exhibition painting, A Church Pew, East Bergholt 1810 (Tate), and seems to have been depicted by him when wishing to invoke associations with eighteenth-century literature or artistic prototypes.14 Its inclusion in these two autumnal woodland landscapes may thus indicate that Constable wished them to be read as paying homage to eighteenth-century representations of these scenes; and via these, to earlier Dutch prototypes; and specifically to representations of these scenes (and via those, autumn woodland landscapes may similarly echo the two creatures in Helmingham Dell in later years based on an important early drawing made in the park).15 However, there is no record that he visited Helmingham around this date, nor did he have any outstanding commissions with the Tollemaache family which might have necessitated a visit there at this time. Indeed, given his desire to stay close to his ailing father, it seems just as likely that the woods shown in these two paintings were遥 to East Bergholt.

Unlike The Woodhipe, however, these two woodland scenes were probably painted by Constable chiefly indoros. Autumn Landscape is painted on millboard and also has extensive pinholes around its edges, both of which features – were it to have been painted before 1816 – would tend to point to plein-air work but which by 1830 are less conclusive indicators.16 Indoros or outdoors, plein-air or studio work, both paintings nevertheless reveal the careful attention of the artist to the elements which associate with his style in the period 1824–47, refined through outdoor work and direct observation but also strongly mediated through Gainsborough.

NOTES
2 Reynolds, op. cit., nos 15 and 15.4
3 Reynolds, ibid., no. (23) Clark art bulletin 8/7, 1927
5 The later exhibition painting of the edge of a wood at Helmingham, Helmingham Dell, might be somewhere near the village-island of 22 June 1814 refers to his visiting the British Institution to see this exhibition, which he had earlier told Maria Constable (letter 4 May 1829) was eagerly anticipating R.B. Beckett, 1996, pp.229 and 232.
6 For a Church Pew, East Bergholt (cat. no 2192), see Reynolds 1990, no.15.3 and L. Paris, The Tate Gallery Constable Collection, London, 1996, p.2, where both paintings are given the tradition of churchyard melancholy in painting and poetry going back to Thomas Gray’s famous sonnet in a County Churchyard (1797). David G. Taylor (see note 4) identifies the red-clad figure in Edge of a Wood as wearing a tricorn hat which went out of fashion by c.1800, and suggests the red cape is a riding cloak of c.1795.
7 Pike Watts wrote to Constable on 17 October 1810 that... the Artist’s View of Nature now presents the admired October woods, which the authorship may wonder is dated through Gainsborough. However, by the time he goes his Lectures on Landscape Painting in 1819 and spoke of the ability of Gainsborough’s paintings to ‘bring tears to our eyes’ it is clear he was responding to the sentimental appeal of the artist’s later work.
8 Pike Watts may have acquired Cornard Wood directly from Joseph Boydell in 1810. We know it was certainly in his collection by 1814 as it went to his son in 1814 to 1815, and to his daughter, as its ground, has very plausibly been identified by Jennifer Thomson (see note 4) as Lot 20 of the sale of Constable’s estate, Factor, 10 May, 1838, either it was never delivered to Pike Watts owing to this failing health, or it was returned to Constable shortly before his death.
9 See note 6 for versions of Helmingham Dell based on a large drawing done by Constable in 1810 (Reynolds 1990, no.15.1).
10 I am grateful to Sarah Crowe for confirming that Autumn Landscape is painted on millboard (and onto a cradled mahogany panel), see S. Crowe, ‘Woodland Landscape: Condition & Treatment 2012’. The board has seven pinholes but these might relate to Constable painting the study to a wall for consultation when working on Edge of a Wood (A Wood). Autumn) rather than holes made when painting the work onto another, firmer surface to support it while painting in the open air. Furthermore, while millboard is a surface Constable does not seem to adopt specifically with plein-air work in mind, as Sarah Crowe points out Constable was using this same support in 1810 – only three years after Woodland Landscape – for a compositional study in oils, The Opening of Winter’s Bridge (V&A, Reynolds 1984, no.19.19).

[84]

[95]
Oil and tempera with pen and ink on panel
10 ½ x 15 inches · 265 x 380 mm
Painted in the early 1830s

Collections
Probably, John Giles, a cousin of the artist, 1811–1880;
Probably, Giles sale, Christie’s, a February
1881, lot 169, (bought by The Fine Art
Society);
Richard Budge, acquired c.1890;
and thence by descent, 2014.

Literature
Frederick George Stevens, Notes on a collection
of drawings, paintings and etchings by the
late Samuel Palmer, 1881, pp.5 & 15;
Raymond Lister, Catalogue raisonné of
the works of Samuel Palmer, 1988, p.115, catalogue
no.69 (where incorrectly dated);
To be published by Colin Harrison in
his forthcoming book on Palmer for the
Ashmolean Museum as well as in his
projected revision of Raymond Lister’s
catalogue raisonné.

Exhibited
Probably, London, Royal Academy, 1881,
no.419, “Landscape – Twilight”;
London, Fine Art Society, A Collection
of Drawings, Paintings and Etchings
by the late Samuel Palmer, 1881, no.7 as
“Twilight”;
Arts Council, Samuel Palmer and his Circle:
The Shoreham Period, 1956, no.42;
Arts Council, Samuel Palmer and his Circle:
The Shoreham Period, 1957, no.63;
Sheffield, Graves Art Gallery, Samuel Palmer,
1961, no.7;
Oxford, on loan to the Ashmolean Museum,

Landscape – Twilight is a work of extraordinary power, beauty and importance
representing a culmination of the work
Samuel Palmer produced while living in the
Kent village of Shoreham. Shoreham was
physically and intellectually removed from
London, allowing Palmer to initially explore
a range of visionary subjects inspired by the
work of William Blake. By 1830 Palmer’s
work had become less abstract and more
classical and naturalistic in its approach as
he attempted to find a commercial voice.
Landscape – Twilight was executed at this
crucial transitional moment. Whilst Palmer
constructs a pastoral landscape of shepherd
and his flock seated above a view of a
sweeping valley, the painting is executed
with a bold, artificial palette adding a vision-
ary quality entirely typical of his earliest
Shoreham works. A lyrical evocation of
landscape and essay in the numinous quali-
ties of nature executed at a crucial moment
of change in Palmer’s work, this painting is
a masterpiece of European Romanticism.
Landscape – Twilight is in terms of condition,
provenance and history the most impor-
tant of Palmer’s oil landscapes left in
private hands.

Samuel Palmer moved to the village of
Shoreham in 1826 and lived there permanent-
ly until he bought a house in London in 1832.
Palmer later wrote of this period: “Forced
into the country by illness, I lived afterwards
for about seven years at Shoreham, in Kent,
with my father, who was inseparable from
his books… There, sometimes by ourselves,
sometimes visited by friends of congenial
taste, literature, and art and ancient music
wiled away the hours, and a small independ-
ce made me heedless, for the time, of
further gain; the beautiful was loved for
itself.” Encouraged by other members of the
Ancients, a group of like-minded artists and
friends who met from 1824, Palmer produced
a series of severely primitive works inspired
by William Blake.

By 1830 Palmer’s mystical view of nature
was being modified by the influence of John
Linnell, who urged him to work directly
from the landscape.
Shoreham was in turmoil, with the ‘Captain’s hills and spacious plains’ around it. The connection between the village and ‘the swelling spire at the heart of the composition – despite Shoreham church being one of the few in Kent without a spire – its presence acts as a reminder of the unity of nature, nation and religion enjoyed by the Anglican Church. It is a composition which unites Palmer with the wider themes of Romantic landscape painting across Europe.

The trees on the right of the composition – distant hills – whilst retaining a quality of glowing sky and deep blues of the sunset, bold design of his great Shoreham watercolours and technical innovations of Blake. Landscape – Twilight was probably painted for exhibition, whilst Palmer submitted several works with generic titles which could describe the present work to exhibitions in the early 1830s, it has not been conclusively linked to a specific known exhibited work. The first documented owner of the Landscape – Twilight is John Giles, Palmer’s cousin, and it can be identified with some certainty as lot 619 in Giles’s posthumous sale. Giles was one of the Ancients although he was not a painter, but a stockbroker by profession and helped look after Palmer’s often precarious financial affairs, managing, on occasion, to act as a buffer between Palmer and his father-in-law, John Linnell. Landscape – Twilight was acquired by the Fine Art Society at the Giles sale and included in their pioneer work around 1830: the seated pastoral figure; boldly constructed flower; a flock of sheep; a golden sunset, bold design of his great Shoreham watercolours and technical innovations of Blake.

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The Letters of Samuel Palmer

Ed. Raymond Lister, The Letters of Samuel Palmer


Christiano, A February 2016, lot 619.

A Collection of Drawings, Paintings and Prints by the Late Samuel Palmer, 1850–74. ‘Twilight’.

Ed. Raymond Lister, The Letters of Samuel Palmer

NOTES

1 Ed. Raymond Lister, The Letters of Samuel Palmer

2 Ed. Raymond Lister, The Letters of Samuel Palmer


5 Christano, A February 2016, lot 619.

6 A Collection of Drawings, Paintings and Prints by the Late Samuel Palmer, 1850–74. ‘Twilight’.

7 Ed. Raymond Lister, The Letters of Samuel Palmer

Palmer was producing works inspired by his time at Shoreham. Landscape – Twilight stands as the greatest of these works; a pure distillation of Palmer’s beatific vision of landscape. The combination of pastoral setting, suspended visual effects and lyrical beauty make this work a monument of Romanticism; an assessment amplified by its untouchable condition – Landscape – Twilight has seemingly not been cleaned in the last 100 years – and uninterrupted provenance from Palmer’s cousin. John Giles.

We are very grateful to Colin Harrison and Professor William Vaughan for their help in cataloguing this work.
Samuel Palmer is best known for his original and vivid images of the English countryside, painted during that time that he was living, as a young man, in the Kent Village of Shoreham, between 1826 and 1835. Landscape – Twilight is a fine example of Palmer’s work from that time. While not a literal view of Shoreham, it is clearly inspired by the location. The village nestles in the valley of the river Darent, surrounded by wooded hills. This picture shows a view over such a valley, seen in the glimmering light of departing day. In the foreground a young girl rests, observing the scene. She is surrounded by a flock of sheep and appears to be a shepherdess. (Palmer has also added some oxen for good measure). Such a subject is highly typical for Palmer. There are many pictures he painted at the time expressing a similar ethos, such as the Pastoral Scene of 1835 now in the Ashmolean Museum Oxford (fig. 1). Palmer frequently described such works as pastorals. In doing this he was drawing on a venerable tradition reaching back to classical antiquity. He was a great admirer of the Roman Poet Virgil, who had set the tone for idyllic rural imagery in his Eclogues. Like other poets and painters before him, Palmer saw the pastoral as the means of evoking an ideal rural existence, a life of ease and tranquility to be set against the hectic materialism of the city and the modern age. Indeed, his decision to leave London for Shoreham in 1826 had been driven by a desire to discover some glimpses of a lost golden age in the countryside. For a time he thought he had found this. He once referred to Shoreham and its surrounds as his ‘valley of vision’.

Palmer’s idealized approach to rural life set him on a different path to contemporaries such as John Constable and his own...
Twilight' were shown in three successive exhibitions between 1832 and 1834. 'Twilight' was also sufficiently important to Palmer for him to celebrate it in verse. During his early years – particularly after his meeting with Blake in 1824 – he devoted much time to writing poems on pastoral themes. One of these – which is drafted in his one surviving sketchbook from 1824 – is called 'Twilight Time'. While not altogether a success as a poem, it contains some poignant passages, and is an interesting indicator of the artist’s ideas about that time of day. It begins with an evocation of evening:

And now the trembling light
Glimmers behind the little hill, and corn,
Lingring as loth to part ...
He goes on to imagine looking down on a village at this time of day, much as in the picture under discussion here. The witness of the scene shall look e’er yonder grassy hill,
At this village, safe and still.

Then, a few lines later, Palmer introduces the idea that such a scene has a visionary intensity quite unlike that of midday views. Methinks the lingering, dying day
Of twilight time, doth seem more fair,
And light the soul up more than day
When wide-spread sultry sunshines are.

This idea is close in sentiment to those expressed by Wordsworth in his Intimations of Immortality, in which man’s life is compared to the course of a day, and where the growing child gradually moves away from the vision of eternity. Wordsworth wrote:

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from the Shoreham period are firmly dateable. But those few that are suggest that his most visionary and primitivistic work was done prior to 1830, and that there was an effort to move towards technical conventionality in the mid-1830s.

There are both maternal and psychological reasons for this change. When Palmer first went to Shoreham he had recently received a small legacy from his maternal grandfather. This enabled him to live for some years on his own means—economically. The fact that few of his works sold at this time was therefore not a crucial matter to him. He was able to pursue his own way unhindered—presumably in the hope that in time he could win round critics and the public. By the early 1830s, however, funds were getting short. In 1834 he complained of experiencing a ‘most unsatisfactory and unpatriotic kind of poverty’. He had to focus more on earning a living. He took up teaching, and also aimed more seriously at success through exhibition. It is noticeable that his move towards greater conventionality seems to have paid off in terms of getting works accepted for exhibition. Between 1826 and 1831 he only had works accepted by the Academy on two occasions. From 1832 onwards he was accepted by the Academy on two occasions. From 1832 to 1835 he abandoned Shoreham subjects altogether and started exhibiting scenes of areas better known for their natural beauty, such as Devon and North Wales.

The psychological reasons for the change relate more to Palmer’s attitude to rural life. In the early years at Shoreham he appears to have seen the village as a paradise on earth. In the early years at Shoreham he appears to relate more to Palmer’s attitude to rural life. Such events did nothing to dim Palmer’s love for the countryside and nature. But it brought home to him the fact that the old way of life that he had treasured in the countryside was under threat and largely gone for ever. This encouraged a growing sense of nostalgia in the treatment of rural scenes. The fantastic vision of his early Shoreham years gave way to a more regretful and melancholy view of landscape. Twilight would seem to fit into the post-1830 period. Like the Pastoral in the Ashmolean it is more conventional in composition. Indeed, they share a very similar design, with framing trees looking out to a middle ground hill or rock, and then to a distance behind. It is a sign of this return to conventionality that the model for this kind of landscape composition appears to be one of the masters of painting of the mid-eighteenth century. This is the French painter Gaspar Dughet, whose work Palmer had studied in Dublin. [Fig. 1] Like Claude and Poussin, Dughet lived in Rome and specialized in idealized views of the Roman Campagna.

However life in the countryside was far from tranquil at that time and unrest was growing as labourers became increasingly ground down by economic troubles and the effects of the modernization of farming methods. The uprisings of 1830— nota bene the notorious ‘captain swing’ riots where farm machinery was smashed and hayricks burned— affect the Shoreham area of Kent along with other places. If this showed that Shoreham was hardly a paradise on earth, there were further problems ahead when the Reform Bill of 1832 removed much of the political power of the rural communities. Palmer was a passionate opponent of the Reform Bill—writing a hysterical pamphlet against it. Such events did nothing to dim Palmer’s love for the countryside and nature. But it brought home to him the fact that the old way of life that he had treasured in the countryside was under threat and largely gone for ever. This encouraged a growing sense of nostalgia in the treatment of rural scenes. The fantastic vision of his early Shoreham years gave way to a more regretful and melancholy view of landscape. Twilight would seem to fit into the post-1830 period. Like the Pastoral in the Ashmolean it is more conventional in composition. Indeed, they share a very similar design, with framing trees looking out to a middle ground hill or rock, and then to a distance behind. It is a sign of this return to conventionality that the model for this kind of landscape composition appears to be one of the masters of painting of the mid-eighteenth century. This is the French painter Gaspar Dughet, whose work Palmer had studied in Dublin. [Fig. 1] Like Claude and Poussin, Dughet lived in Rome and specialized in idealized views of the Roman Campagna. This particular work in Dulwich seems to have formed a specific point of departure. Although this format is a standard one, its particular treatment has special affinities with Dughet, especially the dominating effect of the hill rising above the horizon line in the central ground. It may have been that Palmer was returning here to a more conventional compositional type in the hope of making his work more saleable. On the other hand, the picture is quite different from the Dughet in its lighting, effects and mood. Here Palmer is still very much himself.

Though the motif of the rock relates to Dughet, it seems to connect this picture also with a series of designs that Palmer made that show a similar rock with the sea beyond. The Pastoral at the Ashmolean is one of these, and there are others in the Tate, at Yale and in the British Museum. These have tended to be dated 1830–4 for a particular reason. This is that they all show the sea. Palmer made his first trip to Devon in 1834, and it is supposed that these pictures show the effect of this visit. It is even supposed that the rock relates to Combe Martin bay that Palmer had admired in an engraving prior to going to Devon. The closeness of the rock motif in the present work to that in the Oxford Pastoral and the other might lead one to suppose that this work, too, is from that period. If this is the case it might well be the ‘Landscape: Twilight’ that Palmer exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1835. However, it should be recalled that there is no sea in this work, and it might be that it is the connection with Dughet that is more important. Whatever the case, all the evidence in the work points to a date after 1830.

The picture is painted using a combination of oil and tempera, a process Palmer habitually used in the mid-thirties. Prior to 1830 Palmer had affected a score of oil painting—inspired to some degree by Blake who associated it with the materialism of post-medieval art. This mixed media approach was later abandoned by Palmer, first for conventional oil painting and later for watercolour, which became the prevailing painting medium of his later years. This picture came from Palmer’s family, which points to it not having been sold, despite having been clearly intended for exhibition. This again is typical of works from the mid-1830s.

Landscape: Twilight — a beautiful, primitivist scene, painted at a time when Palmer was going Shoreham one last chance, and hoping still to convey something of his unique vision of twilight to the public.
Pencil · 7 x 4 ¼ inches · 180 x 115 mm
Signed ‘Alfred Croquis’ (lower left), also inscribed ‘Talleyrand’ (lower right)
Drawn c.1832

This is the original drawing by the Irish artist Daniel Maclise — using the pseudonym Alfred Croquis — for the engraved image included in the series of notable characters he created for Fraser’s Magazine in the 1830s. Fraser’s Magazine, founded in 1830 by William Maginn, used satire and ridicule to forward a campaign for progressive social and economic reform. It also offered a platform for advanced literary and intellectual comment, publishing the early work of such authors as Thackeray and Carlyle. Maclise’s caricatures were highly novel and executed with great wit and elegance. His predominantly linear style was well adapted to the medium of the print and the majority were executed with a lithographic pen.¹

Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord was successfully foreign minister under Napoleon and Louis XVIII, who continually pursued a peaceful settlement to conflict in Europe and was a leading figure at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Talleyrand was the French ambassador to London from 1830 to 1834 and played a major role in the London Conference which effectively achieved the recognition of Belgium as an independent state. Maclise’s highly evocative pencil drawing was made during Talleyrand’s stay in London. The present drawing was published as a lithograph in the magazine with an accompanying character sketch written by Maginn. As William Bates noted in his publication of The Maclise Portrait-Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters:

‘The portrait by Maclise before us is certainly sufficiently hideous, reminding one of a morbid preparation in spirits, or one of those objects of natural history which we see in glass cases, impaled on a pin. Still, it is an admirable drawing, and probably hardly caricatured as to likeness … A most characteristic sketch, of the wonderful old man?’²

Dante Gabriel Rossetti noted in the Academy that:

‘One picture stands out from the rest in mental power, and ranks Maclise as a great master of tragic satire. It is that which grimly shows us the senile torpor of Talleyrand, as he sits in after-dinner sleep between the spread board and the fire-place, surveyed from the mantel-shelf by the busts of all the sovereigns he had served.’³

Rossetti concluded his careful description of the print by observing:

‘The picture is more than a satire; it might be called a diagram of Damnation; a ghastly historical verdict which becomes the image of man for ever.’

Fully signed by Maclise using his pseudonym Alfred Croquis, this drawing is an important survival demonstrating Maclise’s skill as a draughtsman and acuity as a satirist.

NOTES

³ The Academy, April 15, 1871.
RICHARD JAMES LANE 1800–1872

Queen Victoria

Pencil and watercolour
7½ x 6 inches · 190 x 153 mm
Drawn 1837

Lithograph by Richard Lane, published June 21, 1837, by J. Dickinson and J. Graf, printer to the Queen, ‘Her Most Excellent Majesty the Queen’. Published to celebrate Victoria’s accession to the throne the previous day.

Richard Lane was the most fashionable and successful portrait lithographer of the early nineteenth century and he executed a number of printed portraits of Queen Victoria. This exquisitely rendered profile drawing was made in preparation for a print of the young Queen Victoria which was published the day after her accession on 20th June 1837. A rare survival (the only other recorded slightly later example is in the Royal Collection) and of outstanding quality, this delicate portrait shows the young queen at the beginning of her long reign and formed the basis of a hugely popular lithograph.

As the age of sixteen Lane was apprenticed to the line engraver Charles Heath. After completing his apprenticeship he worked as an engraver for some years, and in 1827 produced a print after Sir Thomas Lawrence’s Red Riding Hood. By this time he had become dissatisfied with the commercialization of engraving and had abandoned it for lithography, a process Heath had been one of the first to practise in Britain. He first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1824 and continued exhibiting there regularly until his death, and also occasionally at the Suffolk Street Gallery. He was elected an ARA in 1827. Not long before this he had dedicated his Studies of Figures by Gainsborough (1825) to the president of the Royal Academy, Sir Thomas Lawrence. Lane produced most of the plates of this work in tinted lithography in imitation of Gainsborough’s crayon originals, many of which were drawn on tinted paper and heightened with white. The outcome was one of the most remarkable applications of tinted lithography in the 1820s.

Lane’s specialism was portraiture, and he produced hundreds of lithographs of this kind, including portraits of members of the royal family, leading artists and actors, and other notable figures, among them Lord Byron. The quality of his portrait lithography was reflected in the fees he charged, which in 1849 were sometimes as high as £100.

Victoria first sat for him in 1829 when she was a ten-year-old princess – the drawing is now in the Royal Collection – he then made drawings of her shortly after she became queen in 1837, when he was appointed Lithographer to the Queen, and three years later to the Prince Consort. In each of these prints the queen is seen in profile, her hair dressed in a distinctive style – some show her wearing a Ferronière, a pendant on her forehead, as in the present drawing and others a wreath of flowers – with a plaited bun. Given the high quality of the present drawing, it may well be identifiable with one exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1838, possibly as no.590 ‘Profile of Her Majesty’ and this is given further credence by the survival of a fragment of an old label dating this drawing to 1838. Depictions of the young Queen Victoria are rare and this beautifully rendered, tinted profile drawing is an important addition to her iconography, made by the most important and celebrated lithographer of the day.

Notes
Daniel Maclise RA 1806–1870

The Debut in London of Niccolò Paganini

Pencil
5 ½ x 4 inches · 140 x 102 mm
Drawn 1831

Collections
Ambrose Poynter (1796–1886); Charles Francis Bell, grandson of the above; Edward Croft-Murray (1907–80), acquired in 1938; and by descent, to 1996; Private collection, 2014

Literature

Exhibited
London, National Portrait Gallery and Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland, Daniel Maclise, 1972, no.36.

This engaging pencil study was made from life by the Irish artist Daniel Maclise at the debut of the Italian virtuoso violinist Niccolò Paganini in London on 3 June at the King’s Theatre in London. Articles in The Times (including concert review, 5th June 1831) and Playgoer were among many which noted the astonishment shown by musicians on the stage and audience alike. Our study showing Paganini concentrating on his own playing – with a vignette of Paganini’s left hand carefully posed in a complicated piece of fingering – whilst three members of the orchestra watching captivated. Apart from Paganini himself, Maclise captured the pianist, cellist and double-bass player who made up the continuo of the larger orchestra; they have been tentatively identified as: the cellist Robert Lindley, double bass player Domenico Dragonetti and another figure, possibly the violinist Nicolas Mori or possibly the conductor Sir George Smart.

Maclise seems to have used this sketch as a study for a larger highly finished drawing now in the V&A, which in turn served as the basis for Richard Lan’s lithograph entitled ‘The Modern Orpheus’ which communicated the frenetic – almost demonic – playing of Paganini which captivated audiences throughout Europe. Paganini behaved as a self-acknowledged genius, and was often credited as a musician with diabolical powers. Paganini wrote at the time of his English visit: ‘Scores of portraits of me made by different artists have appeared in all the print shops.’

This fascinating drawing – a document of one of the most remarkable musical evenings in London’s musical life – belonged successively to the Ambrose Poynter the nineteenth-century architect, his grandson Charles Francis Bell, Keeper of Art at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and Edward Croft-Murray, the Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum.

NOTES
Edwin Landseer, a hugely talented and instinctive draughtsman was greatly in demand amongst his social circle for his extemporary drawings and caricatures and his studies of Nicolò Paganini were especially sought after. Paganini’s debut in London in 1831 generated immense excitement and a number of artists depicted him in action; this catalogue includes a study by Daniel Maclise made at the performance which was turned into a popular lithograph. Paganini returned to London throughout his performing career and the present drawing seems to have been made by Landseer whilst Paganini was in London in 1834. Landseer has captured the drama inherent in Paganini’s often frenzied performances, something which contemporaries were acutely aware of; the carefully articulated fingers of the left hand and the raised bow, ready to play, the intense gaze and bent knee also suggest the intensity of Paganini’s performance.

Our drawing is one of a number of portraits of Paganini executed by Landseer. The first was made at a soirée given by Marguerite, Countess of Blessington, at Gore House in 1831. She and her lover Count d’Orsay were close friends of Landseer. The Blessington drawing, now in a private collection, depicts Paganini intensely playing the violin, as Richard Ormond has noted, Landseer has drawn Paganini: ‘with an air of wrapt concentration, eyes staring, nose prominent, long hair streaming out over his shoulders. This is the picture of a man of genius transported by his art.’

Landseer produced other drawings of Paganini more or less based upon the same format and pose: a full-length study is in the collection of the Royal Academy of Music and a study close to the present drawing is preserved in the City of Manchester Art Galleries.

The Blessington drawing was subsequently reproduced as a private lithographic plate by Charles Hulmandel in 1842, this suggests the popularity and longevity of Landseer’s depiction of Paganini.

The present drawing is inscribed on its contemporary backing sheet ‘April 16 1834 , the date of a concert Paganini gave at the Adelphi Theatre in London. The programme of public concerts over three nights included a number of works composed and performed by Paganini, including his famous ‘Sonata Militare: performed entirely on one string, the fourth.’ Although Richard Ormond has dated all Landseer’s drawings of Paganini to 1831, it seems just as likely that they date from slightly later and the present study could well have been completed in 1834.

Landseer was a master of caricature and the present dynamic drawing depicts Paganini as he was seen by a contemporary audience: the embodiment of Romantic genius.

NOTES
George Richmond was in Paris over the Christmas of 1847 for a short two week visit and it seems likely that whilst there he completed this intimate portrait of Chopin, then terminally ill. Characteristic of Richmond's rapid and intelligent portraiture, this sensitive study is an unpublished and previously unrecorded depiction of the great Romantic composer.

The beginning of 1848 was a bleak moment for Chopin; he had recently ended his decade-long relationship with George Sand and was on the eve of delivering his final public performance in Paris. Fanny Erskine, who was travelling with her aunt Mrs Mary Rich and are recorded staying at the house of Chopin’s British patrons, the Schwabes, in the Champs-Elysées, gives a vivid description of Chopin during their meetings at Katherine Erskine’s house:

‘He is such an interesting looking man but Oh! So suffering, & so much younger than I had expected. He exerted himself talking at dinner & seemed so interested in Mendelssohn & the honors paid to his memory in London but said there was something almost enviable in his fate dying in the midst of his family surrounded by love – it with his wife beside him – it having lived so purely happy a life – & with his wife beside him – & having died in a family. I felt for him for they say he is so lonely & obliged to even to go out for his breakfast & suffering dreadfully from asthma… he grew quite playful & seemed to forget his suffering.’

Richmond was staying with Katherine Erskine in Paris, the widow of James Erskine of Linlathen. In 1848 Richmond drew and engraved a portrait of Katherine Erskine’s brother-in-law, the theologian, Thomas Erskine. He would go on to paint Fanny Erskine, later Mrs Thomas Fawcett. Richmond left his own account of his meeting with Chopin in Paris in 1848 which was recounted by A.M.W. Stirling in 1912:

The great master was carried in from his bedroom, wrapped up in blankets sweating in the last stage of consumption; but directly he touched the piano, inspiration came back to him and the fire of life returned. He played and played, like a drifting dream, dainty themes like weft of gossamer, strains like the echo of a fairy’s dance, and all the while his hacking cough left the grace of his fantasy with cruel reminder of the advance of death.

Richmond’s rapid, intimate study captures both Chopin’s weak state of health, particularly in his gaunt, thin face and his latent energy, in his animated, penetrating eyes. Made the year before Chopin died, this portrait is an important addition to Chopin’s iconography. The youthful figure of Delacroix’s great 1828 double portrait of Chopin and George Sand had been replaced by a more world weary figure. As such this portrait is not only an important addition to Richmond’s oeuvre, but a significant discovery for Chopin scholars.

Notes
William Turner of Oxford 1782–1862

The Sands at Barmouth, North Wales

William Turner first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1807 and in January 1808 he became the youngest associate of the Society of Painters in Water Colours and in November a full member. His precocity was further reinforced when he was chosen to preside at the inaugural meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Fine and Pastoral Design, a reincarnation of the Sketching Society which earlier included Thomas Girtin and John Sell Cotman as well as Varley among its members. This was the moment when Varley, at Millar, the Booksellers evening conversation, spoke violently of the merit of a young man who had been his pupil in learning to draw in water colour and Repeat and ‘He had never before seen drawings equal to these’. His name was Turner.3

In 1810 one critic voiced the opinion, ‘it is not flattery to say that he has outstripped his master.’ This must be on the basis of major works which are the climax of these early years such as the bleak and stormy Scene near Woodstock, exhibited in 1809 (Private collection, USA, formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd) and Whichwood Forest, Oxfordshire (Victoria and Albert Museum, London), which shows a dense yet uninviting, appearing at first sight rather sombre and uninviting, appearing at first sight rather sombre, with its brooding sky offered Turner the glimpse of tranquility. The technical and imaginative resources of this work are the fruit of Turner’s study of both old and modern masters.

In about 1814 Turner’s cousin acquired a farm in the New Forest and Turner was a regular visitor. He exhibited scenes of that ancient woodland from 1814 and also began to explore the south Downs, which he depicted in sparse panoramic vistas overlooking Portsmouth harbour or Bovillic near Chichester. In keeping with the times, these could be monumental in scale. One of the occasional oils Turner continued to paint from time to time throughout his career, View of Portsmouth Harbour from Portsdown Hill, exhibited at the British Institution in 1812, measured 6 feet 7 inches wide, including the frame. This ambition culminated in Turner of Oxford’s most spectacular exhibition watercolour Near East Leigh, Cleve, on the River Teign, Devonshire, Dartmoor in the distance, which he showed at the Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1834. (National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd).

In the same year Turner showed this small, powerful view of Barmouth in North Wales. Like the considerably larger watercolour of Devon, the view of Barmouth with its brooding sky offered Turner the opportunity to note:

His works are not only unobtrusive, but even unassuming, appearing at first sight rather sombre and uninviting, appearing at first sight rather sombre; but when sought, they are discovered to be worth the effort which engaged their acquaintance, being intelligent and replete with the sterling properties of landscape art.

The quiet, powerful landscapes of William Turner remain comparatively little known. This powerful sheet perfectly demonstrates the ‘unobtrusive’ and ‘sombre’ aspect of his work, but also underlines his exceptionally technical ability and the ‘intelligence’ of his vision.

Writing in 1831, an anonymous reviewer of the annual exhibition at the Society of Painters in Water-Colours praised the work of William Turner of Oxford, noting that they were not well known or suited to the exhibition where the ‘frivolous manner of colouring’ of many works was ‘so injurious to that sober style of painting which is the object of Mr Turner’s study, and in which he particularly excels.’ The reviewer went on to note:

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Watercolour

10¼ x 14½ inches: 262 x 362 mm

Signed ‘W Turner Oxford’ (lower right, over-mounted partially) Painted 1832

Collections

Private collection, 1972;
Jean Foreman, by 1977 to 1997;
Spink-Leger, London;
Private collection, USA, acquired from the above 1997 to 2014.

Exhibited

London, Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1813, no.157, 6 guineas.

Private collection, USA, formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd);
Private collection, 1987 to 1997;
Private collection, 1972;
Collections

Painted 1832

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Private collection, 1987 to 1997;
Private collection, 1972;
Collectors
opportunity to demonstrate his prodigious
talents as a technician in watercolour.
The small port of Barmouth, close to the
mountains of Snowdonia, had long been
included in the picturesque tours of North
Wales. In John Britton’s account of the town
in his *The Beauties of England and Wales*
of 1812, Barmouth, its adjacent landscape and
river are thus described:

The river forms an arch of the sea, and when the
estuary is full of water, the scenes which present
themselves for some miles are truly picturesque.
In the composition of the different views, scarcely
anything can be conceived wanting: every
requisite for fine landscape; mountain and valley,
rocks, meadows, woods, water, are here grouped,
and arranged in the most beautiful order.

In the present view Turner has delib-
erately eschewed the conventions of the
picturesque; choosing the estuary when the
river is almost empty and tide out to reveal
an expanse of exposed sand, the thin blue
line of the horizon and distant mountains
and the large expanse of brooding sky.
The reduced palette and depopulated landscape,
Turner has only included a few diminutive
figures, add to the intensity and atmosphere
of the view. The critic John Ruskin came late to
Turner’s work, praising his landscapes in
*Modern Painters* in 1851, for their: ‘quiet and
simple earnestness, and tender feeling.’ A
perfect summation of Turner’s achievement
in his view of Barmouth which is celebra-
tion of the grandeur of landscape and
climate and rejection of the artificiality of
the picturesque. Although Turner of Oxford
is far less famous than his contemporary
namesake, J.M.W. Turner, both shared a
prodigious ability as watercolourists and
their technical invention enabled their
compositions to transcend the purely
topographical. In its subtlety, extraordinary
technical virtuosity and profound beauty
this picture is both amongst the greatest of
Turner of Oxford’s work, albeit of a small
format, and an example of the imaginative
and technical facility of British water-
colourists in the first half of the nineteenth
century.

**William Turner of Oxford**

*A View in Devon from Mannerton, 1832*
Watercolour with scratching out and gum arabic
29 ½ x 42 ¾ inches · 750 x 1085 mm · In the original frame
National Gallery of Art, Washington DC
(formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd)

**Notes**

1 *Arnold’s Library of the Fine Arts or Repertory
of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture and Engraving*
2 ed. Kathryn Cave, *The Diary of Joseph
Farington*, New Haven and London, 1982, 9,
p.3209.
3 *Watercolour exhibitions*, Ackerman’s
Repository of the Arts, Literature and
Commerce, 5 July 1810, p.342.
4 John Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales*
5 John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, London, 1848,
I, p.69.
This watercolour was painted during Turner’s tour of the Alps in 1836, an important journey that is now recognised as a crucial watershed in the development of his later style and working methods. The colour studies he made during the tour are not thought to be preliminary designs for future commissions, but have been aptly described by Professor David Hill as ‘sufficient and entire unto themselves’. In his account of Turner’s route, Professor Hill proposed that the principal value of the sketches was the use they ‘served at the time, to focus and structure the process of observation’, thereby intensifying the experience (Hill 2000, p.261).

Turner’s objective in his 1836 travels was to revisit an area he had first explored half a lifetime ago. He was then sixty-one, but as a twenty-seven year old he had rushed to the Alps in 1802, during the short-lived Peace of Amiens. Whereas, for most of Turner’s travels, we have little first-hand information about his movements or his opinions of the places he visited, the 1836 journey was of quite a different character. For a start, he was accompanied for much of it, which was a circumstance he otherwise seems to have preferred to avoid. His companion this year was the young Scottish landowner, Hugh Andrew Johnstone Munro of Novar (1797–1864), whom he had known since the later 1820s. By 1836 Munro was already becoming the most dependable collector of Turner’s latest paintings. This was in itself remarkable at a time when, increasingly, the artist’s pictures returned, unsold, at the end of the annual Royal Academy exhibitions. Munro’s interests were wide-ranging, as was his taste for art; his collection included many works by his contemporaries, as well as works by artists of the past, of whom he was a great admirer. His collection included a large number of watercolours and drawings, and Munro was a keen amateur painter himself.

JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER RA 1775–1851

A Distant View over Chambéry, from the North, with Storm Clouds

Watercolour
9 ¾ x 10 ¾ inches · 248 x 273 mm
Painted 1836

collections
John Edward Taylor; Taylor sale, Christie’s, 8th July 1912, lot 107

‘A Mountainous Landscape: a town seen in a valley, in the middle distance’, (1800 go to Gähbe), Horace Gibbs;
Mrs Willard Straight (née Dorothy Payne Whitney, later Mrs Leonard K. Elmhirst), acquired from or through Horace Gibbs in 1912, to 1946;
Mrs Robert B. Choate, Danvers MA, by 1946, to 1984;
Leger Galleries, London; Private collection, acquired from the above, 1984;
By descent, 2014

literature
Walter Thornbury, The Life and Correspondence of J.M.W. Turner, 1901, vol.1, pp.239–241 (not also George Jones’s annotated copy of this book, formerly in the possession of Frances Haskell, and now in the Print Room at Tate Britain; this contains Munro of Novar’s own recollections of the 1836 tour);

EXHIBITED
New York, Metropolitan Museum, 1932–3; on loan from Mrs Dorothy Whitney Straight;
New York, Kende Galleries at Gimball Bros., 1948, no.241;
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Collections of J. M. W. Turner, John Crowther and R. P. Brinington, 1946, no.41 (lent by Mrs Robert B. Choate);
London, Leger Galleries, English Watercolours, 1984, no.2 (as ‘An Alpine Valley, probably the Val d’Aosta’);

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as notable old master paintings (such as the Madonna dei Candelabri at the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, then attributed to Raphael). He was apparently also a talented amateur, though examples of his work are now rare.

In foregoing the pleasurable solitude usual on his travels, it is apparent that Turner was taking a paternal interest in his young patron, attempting to distract him from a potentially hazardous entanglement in politics (see Hill 2000, p.262). At the time Turner may also have felt somewhat beholden to Munro, who appears to have bankrolled his stay in Venice in 1835. Presumably the wealthy Scotsman also largely subsidised their joint expenses in 1836.

Most usefully, Munro later provided short reports, with valuable details of the journey, both to John Ruskin in 1857, and to Walter Thornbury, the journalist who wrote one of the earliest biographies of Turner (1862). Combining these with Turner’s own notebooks and his watercolour sketches, it is possible to reconstruct the outline of the tour, and get a sense of where the two men paused. Some of the material that Turner produced at various places, as described by Munro, can be identified precisely, whilst other items appear not to have survived. How some of this got separated from the bulk of Turner’s personal studies, now in his bequest at Tate Britain, is a matter of speculation. The correspondence between Ruskin and Munro reveals that it came onto the market in the later 1850s via a foreign dealer, but unfortunately there is nothing more to record the precise source of the colour sketches.

Since it first appeared, the watercolour discussed here was readily associated with the 1836 tour to the Aosta valley because of the distinctive character of the colours Turner used, which can also be found in several of the other studies (see those discussed in Andrew Wilton, *The Life and Work of J.M.W. Turner*, Fribourg 1979, pp.474–4, nos.1430–1431), the present watercolour was unknown to Wilton when he prepared that catalogue. Despite its evident connection with the Alpine tour, no specific subject was proposed until Professor Hill, in his 2000 exhibition catalogue, linked the scene with Sallanches, in the Arve Valley, to the north-west of Mont Blanc.

According to Munro, he and Turner had stopped at St Martin and Sallanches quite early in their route through the Alps, and it may have been a significant moment, though the accounts are somewhat muddled and conflicting. In a letter to Ruskin dated 14 November 1857, Munro said that he had not noticed Turner taking his colours out until they were actually in Switzerland, though he had himself worked in watercolour at Sallanches. Subsequently, however, in Thornbury’s rather garbled version, Turner is described as having witnessed Munro struggling with a colour sketch at Sallanches rather than commenting on it. Turner tactfully ‘took up a new drawing-pad that was lying near… and off he went to “see what he could do with it.”’ He returned in about two hours with the paper squared into four sketches, each in a different stage of completion.’ According to Thornbury, ‘This was evidently his rough, kind way of showing an amateur friend the way of pushing forward a sketch.’

There are several sketches of Sallanches in the Turner Bequest (see TB CCCXLII 75, 76, 77; two of these are reproduced left; the third is Hill 2000, p.122, no.13). In these the lively outlines of the town and the distant mountains are worked in plumbago, the graphite medium described by Munro as Turner’s preferred choice on the early stages of the journey. In his catalogue, Hill linked these three sketches with this watercolour and the anecdote just related (even though the paper on which the watercolour is painted is different from that used for the

*J. M. W. Turner
Sallanches, 1836
Chalk and graphite · 9 ⅜ x 12 ⅛ inches · 237 x 310 mm
© Tate, London 2014, TB CCCXLII 75/ D34277

J. M. W. Turner
Sallanches, 1836
Chalk and graphite · 9 ½ x 12 inches · 240 x 305 mm
© Tate, London 2014, TB CCCXLII 76/ D34278
sketches. One of the telling details he identified for making a connection between these works was that the upper part of one of the sketches bears traces of watercolour, indicating that the sheet had been placed below another where work on the sky had necessarily gone beyond the top edge of the uppermost work. The assumption was that the cloudy sky in the ‘Sallanches’ watercolours must have been caused by these extraneous marks.

In setting out the topography in the image, Hill identified the view as from the Fourés la Sallanches valley, looking over the church of St Jacques directly to the Aiguille de Varan. He notes that Turner had used the same motif to capture the panorama of dramatic topography in his image, Hill identified the view as from the Watercolour Museum in Cambridge owns a study colour that shares some of the same elements as the present watercolour (Hill 2000, no. 94). Both are founded on the yellow-green bases that darken into earthy ochres tones. The shadowy masses of the mountains are in each case given weight by a fairly concentrated blue, which is thinned and darkened in the sky to recreate the passage of rain clouds. In another work, a view of Sallanches, formerly owned by J.E. Taylor (who may also have possessed this watercolour), the pattern through which the image was built up was roughly the same, but Turner also added prominent figures on the road, and scratched away at the painted surface to introduce lively highlights (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; see Hill 2000, no. 95). Another relevant watercolour, and one that bears perhaps the closest comparison is a view of Chambéry (Private collection; Hill 2000, no. 79). Painted later in the tour, and related to sketches in the ‘Fort Bard’ sketchbook, it surveys the attractive historic city from the south-east, with heavy dark clouds borne down to the peaks. The cathedral and the adjacent chateau of the counts and dukes of Savoie are rendered merely as a generalised mass of towering buildings amidst indications of a sprawling urban settlement. This indistinctness is curtained and obtrusively a deliberate decision, because Turner did not record the architecture in the watercolour. Furthermore, had he wanted to corroborate any of the more refined visual information, back in London he could have consulted the sketches he made of Chambéry in January 1836, on his way back from Rome that year (see Ian Warrell, Turner’s Sketchbooks, p. 147).

Several aspects in the south-east view of Chambéry can also be found in the watercolour considered here. They possess exactly the same pale azure range: the dilated grey-brown used for the landmarks of the city; the azure lemon highlights on the hillsides; the darkening blues of higher slope; and the washed-out inkiness of the clouds. Common to both is a patch of solid blue to mark a shaded spot on the left hand side, as well as the shared sense of deep space, artfully created through successive planes of colour. Going back to the ‘Fort Bard’ sketchbook, it is apparent that the watercolour can be related to the various views Turner made of Chambéry from the north (Tate, p. 24 nos. 11, 13, 14, 21). The last of these two, especially, seem to provide the basis for the watercolour view. Typically Turner had favoured a distant prospect that gives a better sense of the wider setting, seen from the outskirts, rather than a composition dealing only in the picturesque particularities of celebrated monuments, as favoured by some of his contemporaries. Indeed, earlier in the tour Munro recalled that Turner had amusingly sought to combine the types of view made in Dijon by James Duffield Harding (1797–1865). Some of the same casual approach to Chambéry’s easy topography may also have been present in the related watercolour study, and in both Turner neglected to work up the landmarks of the city centre. In this instance, the many, left blank at the heart of the image, may have left Turner with the option of giving the buildings fuller treatment at a later stage.

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As they pressed on down the Aosta valley, Turner had anxiously sought to outshine the types of view made in Dijon by James Duffield Harding (1797–1865). Some of the same casual approach to Chambéry’s easy topography may also have been present in the related watercolour study, and in both Turner neglected to work up the landmarks of the city centre. In this instance, the many, left blank at the heart of the image, may have left Turner with the option of giving the buildings fuller treatment at a later stage.

Nevertheless, Hill’s analysis of Turner’s techniques is acute and passionate. ‘It is a tour de force of energetic handling of paint, for the most part working broad passages of colour one up against another, and mixing and modulating directly on the paper, but always, and most impressively in the effects of cloud on the mountains, with an extraneous control of the flow and drying of the paint’ (Hill 2000, p. 142).

As there are grounds for questioning the identification of the view as Sallanches, it is worth briefly considering its place in the sequence of watercolours produced during the tour. Munro of Novar noted that ‘they were generally done in squash sizes, perhaps as big as a large sheet of writing paper’, but that some were ‘cut up in smaller dimensions’. In fact Turner’s 1836 watercolours were generally of a standard landscape format until he climbed above Chamonix towards Mont Blanc, whereupon the sheets he selected were squash, measuring roughly 25 x 28 cms (see Hill 2000, nos. 21, 23, 24, 25). If the view really is Sallanches, it would be the first of the sequence, but it is worth briefly considering its place in Turner’s Mont Blanc series. Another group painted on sheets of the same size was made on the other side of Mont Blanc at Pre-Saint-Didier, in the Aosta Valley looking over Pre-Saint-Didier, in the Aosta Valley (Hill 2000, no. 94). Both are founded on the yellow-green base colours that darken into earthy ochres tones. The shadowy masses of the mountains are in each case given weight by a fairly concentrated blue, which is thinned and darkened in the sky to recreate the passage of rain clouds. In another work, a view of Sallanches, a view of Chambéry (Private collection; Hill 2000, nos. 21, 23, 24, 25). If the view really is Sallanches, it would be the first of the sequence, but it is worth briefly considering its place in Turner’s Mont Blanc series. Another group painted on sheets of the same size was made on the other side of Mont Blanc at Pre-Saint-Didier, in the Aosta Valley looking over Pre-Saint-Didier, in the Aosta Valley (Hill 2000, no. 94).
This small, intense and exquisitely executed watercolour was made by Palmer as a preparatory study for one of the grandest of his Miltonic watercolours, *Lycidas*, which he exhibited at the Society of Painters in Water Colour in 1873. The composition reprised one of Palmer’s most beloved motifs, the ploughman working at the opening of the day. The innovative combination of techniques – Palmer has used watercolour, gouache on a prepared board heightened with scratching out – to create an immediate and lyrical composition which is diluted in the larger finished watercolour. Palmer’s Miltonic watercolours represent the triumph of his later career, marking a return to many of the ideas about landscape which characterised his Shoreham period works.

Palmer was fascinated by Milton throughout his life but only embarked upon his large-scale cycle of illustrations after securing the patronage of the Leonard Rowe Valpy. In 1863 Valpy acquired Palmer’s *Twilight – The Chapel by the Bridge* and after asking Palmer to alter certain aspects of the watercolour he asked the artist if he had anything in hand which specially affected his ‘inner sympathies’. Palmer replied to Valpy:

I carried the Minor Poems in my pocket for twenty years, and once of designs for *L’Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, not one of which I have painted(!), though I have often made and sold other subjects from subjects (not however monotonous in their shape yet still a set; perhaps a dozen or so), half from the one and half from the other poems. For I never artistically knew ‘such a sacred and homefelt delight’ as when endeavoring in all humility, to realize after a sort of imagery of Milton.  

Watercolour over pencil, heightened with scratching out and gouache

4 ⅛ x 6 inches · 104 x 151 mm

Signed ‘S Palmer’ (lower left)

Painted c. 1864–1870

Samuel Palmer 1805–1881

An illustration to Milton’s ‘Lycidas’
Valpy commissioned eight watercolours in total – three from L’Allegro and five from Il Penseroso – Palmer took the undertaking extremely seriously and spent some sixteen years on the project producing multiple studies and versions of each composition. Palmer wrote to Valpy in 1879 that: ‘I considered your taste and feeling so much above the ordinary standard that, in order fully to satisfy them, I have lavished time without limit and measure, even after I myself considered the works complete.’ 3 This had the effect of making the Milton works some of the most technically ambitious watercolours he produced, pushing the boundaries of what could be achieved with the medium and producing grand and chromatically bold works.

Palmer’s fascination with the Miltonic subjects meant he illustrated scenes from Comus and Milton's 1637 pastoral elegy, Lycidas as well as L’Allegro and Comus. The present study illustrates verses from Lycidas, inscribed on the verso of the large watercolour:

Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd
Under the opening eye-lids of the mor'n,
we drove afield, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn

The scene depicts a ploughman harnessing his team of oxen under the brilliantly coloured ‘opening eye-lids of the dawn sky and another figure tending to a herd. Lycidas and the narrator of Milton’s poem. The setting, with its cypress trees and mountainous hills suggests the Arcadian setting of pastoral poetry, whilst the castle on the hill recalls Palmer’s own studies of Harlech Castle. 4 The presence of Flocks of birds in the present watercolour recall the ‘grey-fly winds’ of Milton’s verse, a detail omitted in the larger watercolour. This raises the question of the status of the present work.

Although the large watercolour of Lycidas was not exhibited until 1873 it is likely that our watercolour was made soon after 1864 when Palmer was working out the compositions he was going to paint for Valpy. It is clear from a letter written to the painter George Richmond in 1869 that he was reading and recalling Lycidas. 5 Indeed the present study demonstrates Palmer’s extraordinary ability at communicating a powerfully beatific vision of rural labour on a miniature scale.

NOTES
4 Raymond Lister, Catalogue Raisonné of the works of Samuel Palmer, Cambridge, 1988, nos.267 and 269.

Samuel Palmer
Illustration to Milton's 'Lycidas'
Watercolour over pencil heightened with graphite, gum arabic and scratching out · 15 ½ x 23 inches · 395 x 584 mm
Signed and inscribed
Private collection · Photograph courtesy of Sotheby’s

Samuel Palmer
The Early Ploughman
Etching · 7 ⅛ x 10 inches · 180 x 252 mm
© The Trustees of the British Museum
This major early drawing by Simeon Solomon depicts the Jewish Queen Esther hearing the news that her Persian husband King Ahasuerus plans to massacre the Jews living in his kingdom. Solomon focuses on the moment she hears the news, exploring her considerations of personal grief and the wider tragedy of her race. The intricate and highly finished drawing reflects the influence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti on Solomon’s earliest work. Carefully executed in pen and ink, this drawing is typical of Solomon’s earliest style reflecting his affinity with the previous generation of Pre-Raphaelites and his interest in scenes from Jewish history.

Simeon Solomon trained as a painter in his brother’s studio and at F. S. Cary’s academy until his admission to the Royal Academy Schools in 1856; he made his début at the Royal Academy in 1857 at the age of seventeen. Solomon rapidly became identified with the Pre-Raphaelites through his friendship with Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones although his closeness to Algernon Charles Swinburne from 1863 was to be more significant, strengthening his ties to Pre-Raphaelite poetry and offering new, highly controversial subject matter: Rossetti’s influence is clearly apparent both in the subject matter and technique of Solomon’s watercolours of the late 1850s and early 1860s, particularly in complex drawings such as his depiction of Queen Esther. Solomon has densely worked the sheet with surface detail, in a similar manner to Rossetti’s drawings from this date. For example, the highly finished drawing of Sir Launcelot...
in the Queen's Chamber in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery drawn in 1857 which shows Guinevere at a moment of intense personal crisis, her infidelity with Sir Lancelot having been discovered. 1 Rossetti shows Guinevere standing with her hands clasped looking in despair surrounded by her female attendants who are weeping at the plight of their mistress providing an obvious visual source for Solomon's treatment of Queen Esther. The subject-matter may have been prompted by a project Solomon was involved in to provide illustrations to the Bible. Along with several notable artists in the Pre-Raphaelite circle, Solomon was commissioned by the Dalziel brothers to produce drawings for their projected illustrated Bible, for which he was allocated twenty subjects. The project was never completed, although the illustrations appeared in Dalziel's Bible Gallery published in 1860 with narrative captions. 2 In the present drawing Solomon has captured the description of the king's palace from the Book of Esther, published in the February 1880. 3 The furniture Solomon depicts, for example, appears to have been derived from the excavations at Ninevah and the contemporary Vogue for Pre-Raphaelite historical fidelity first put forward by Ford Madox Brown in his essay 'On the Mechanism of a Historical Picture', published in The Germ in February 1870. 4 The furniture Solomon depicts, for example, appears to have been derived from William Holman Hunt's designs of c.1855, made by J. G. Crace. This striking and meticulously finished drawing neatly represents Solomon's interest in graphic design, particularly his engravings for the Dalziel Bible Gallery and work designing stained glass windows for William Morris. In exceptionally fine condition, this drawing is both an important early work by Solomon and an exceptional, late Pre-Raphaelite work.

NOTES

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882)

Harry Furniss (1854–1925)


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guiness for three drawings. In 1879 Agnew acquired Holman Hunt’s The Shadow of Death for the enormous sum of £10,500, then the highest price paid to an English artist for a painting, the price including the engraving rights. In a single painting show held in the Bond Street gallery Agnew’s showed the painting and sold a hugely popular engraving, the success of which largely defrayed the original cost of the picture, enabling Agnew to donate the painting in 1881 to Manchester City Art Gallery. Agnew in turn promoted his client, Sir Henry Tate’s ambition to build a National Gallery of British Art.

But it was British pictures of the eighteenth century which represented the most spectacular aspect of Agnew’s trade. Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild acquired Gainsborough’s George IV and Reynolds’s Colonel St. Leger for £7,770 and Gainsborough’s Pink Boy for £5,952 and 10 shillings, to Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild, for £5,512 and 10 shillings; to Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild, for £5,750 and 10 shillings; to Sir Julian Goldsmid and in 1887 Sir George Mavor, to sit as an MP for South East Lancashire between 1880 and 1885, the year in which he was created a Baronet. His personal wealth. His securely established position as President of the Council of the Whitworth Art Gallery to sell the gallery works Agnew could not sell elsewhere, Nugent cites a work by George Cattermole purchased at auction in 1889 which he eventually sold to the Whitworth with a decade later. See Charles Nugent, British Watercolours of the Whitworth Art Gallery to sell the gallery works Agnew could not sell elsewhere, Nugent cites a work by George Cattermole purchased at auction in 1889 which he eventually sold to the Whitworth with a decade later. See Charles Nugent, British Watercolours of the Whitworth Art Gallery, The University of Manchester, 2013, p.4.

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A piece dealer created a new model for an international art market as well as great personal wealth. His securely established position enabled him, a supporter of Gladstone, to sit as an MP for South East Lancashire between 1880 and 1885, the year in which he was created a Baronet. His purchase of the sporting and agricultural estate of Rougham in Suffolk in 1887 further underlined his commercial success.

Described by a contemporary as ‘the next Peter Graham but three’. Agnew supplied the taste for landscapes by John Constable, David Roberts, Victorian art. For Joseph Duveen a generation later. Like Duveen Agnew was not above sharp practice. But his career stands as a major landmark in the development of the profession and profile of art dealing.

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Tennant. Agnew commissioned a portrait of the artist Sir John Tenniel in 1883. Tenniel worked as a cartoonist at Punch where he formed a friendship with Agnew, its part-proprietor. The portrait remained with Agnew until his death, when he bequeathed it to the National Gallery. In 1887 Agnew helped initiate Holl’s commission to paint a portrait of the great Liberal politician and former Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone. Gladstone was then Leader of the Opposition and the portrait was painted at Hawarden his estate in Flintshire, it was seen by Agnew in progress; Holl wrote to his wife that Agnew was in ‘the most wild state of enthusiasm over it.’

It was in the same year that Agnew commissioned the portrait of Tenniel, that he sat to Holl himself. The present highly fluid and incisive portrait study was made in preparation for a three-quarter length portrait which Holl exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1883. The rapidly executed portrait is typical of Holl’s work and his sketchy brushwork bears comparison with his fashionable French contemporary, Charles-Émile-Auguste Carolus-Duran. Despite the apparent speed of execution, the highly finished head offers a powerful and extremely revealing character study of one of Holl’s most important supporters. We are grateful to Mark Bills for his help in preparing this entry.

Frank Holl is best known for his genre paintings, but he was celebrated by contemporaries as a portraitists. In 1879 he exhibited at the Royal Academy a portrait of the engraver Samuel Cousins which caused a sensation and until his death in 1888 he painted a further 197 portraits of many political and society figures, Holl’s output reflected the internationalism of the art market by the end of the nineteenth century, one of his last sitters being the great New York banker and collector J. Pierpont Morgan. Holl’s portrait is now in the Morgan Library and Art Gallery. Morgan in turn acquired a great deal of material through Sir William Agnew. Holl was a close friend of Sir William Agnew, a fact testified to by their voluminous correspondence. Agnew was an early promoter of Holl’s work; Holl’s daughter, A.M. Reynolds, describing him as one of her father’s dearest friends and staunchest admirers. Agnew was Secretary of the Frank Holl Memorial Trust set up after Holl’s death, the Trust succeeded in erecting a monument in St Paul’s. Agnew frequently bought and sold Holl’s works, he acquired The Seamstresses, now in the collection of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, at auction in 1884 for 26 guineas and sold it in turn to one of his greatest clients Sir Charles Tennant. Agnew commissioned a portrait of the artist Sir John Tenniel in 1883. Tenniel worked as a cartoonist at Punch where he formed a friendship with Agnew, its part-proprietor. The portrait remained with Agnew until his death, when he bequeathed it to the National Gallery. In 1887 Agnew helped initiate Holl’s commission to paint a portrait of the great Liberal politician and former Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone. Gladstone was then Leader of the Opposition and the portrait was painted at Hawarden his estate in Flintshire, it was seen by Agnew in progress; Holl wrote to his wife that Agnew was in ‘the most wild state of enthusiasm over it.’

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Sir William Agnew, 1st Bt (1825–1910)

[121]}


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NOTES

Frank Holl
Sir John Tenniel, c.1883
Oil on canvas · 603 x 476 mm
In the original Watts style frame
Painted in 1883

Collectors
Sir William Agnew, Walter Agnew, son of the above; Colonel Richard Leslie Agnew, son of the above; Thos. Agnew & Sons, purchased from the above, 17 May 1916; Thomas Agnew & Sons, to 2013.

Literature

Sir William Agnew, 1st Bt (1825–1910)

[121]
Sir William Agnew, 1st Bt (1825–1910)

Marble, on a square yellow marble socle
Height: 30 inches; 762 mm, overall
Signed and dated: ‘E Onslow Ford / 1898’ (to reverse)

Collections
Exhibited

Notes
1. Isabel McAllister, Alfred Gilbert, London, 1924, p.94.
JOHN BRATBY RA 1928–1992

Kitchen Interior with Jean and David

This masterly drawing by John Bratby depicting his wife, the painter Jean Cooke, and two year old son David, amongst the domestic clutter of a kitchen, encapsulates a form of social realism practiced by a number of young artists in the 1950s who were described as ‘kitchen sink’ painters. An unusually ambitious composition made up of four sheets of paper and measuring over 5 feet in height, the drawing demonstrates Bratby’s fascination with the minutiae of everyday life. Made at the height of his critical and commercial success, this bold drawing stands as a remarkable testament to the aims and objectives of the artists who exhibited at the Beaux Arts Gallery in the late 1950s and demonstrates what the critic and cultural historian John Berger noted was their reaction: ‘against Style … as a dishonest keeping up of attitudes or appearances.’

Berger’s review, which ascribed a strong political and social message to Bratby’s paintings, suggested that they: ‘abound with full-blooded affirmation, celebrating the quick as against the dead, pleasure and pain as against oblivion’ adding his intensity ‘disregards all conventions of self-consciousness or dignity.’

Bratby was trained at the Royal College of Art, where he met fellow student Jean Cooke whom he married in April 1954. The same year Bratby had the first of a series of one-man exhibitions at the acclaimed Beaux Arts Gallery, and his public career was launched. With his trademark thick paint and his flair for publicity (he had a talent for leaking stories to the press), Bratby soon became not only a folk hero in the art schools of Britain, but a household name. At first the critics’ response was overwhelmingly supportive, with the Sunday Times...

Black chalk and crayon on four sheets of paper
66 x 41½ inches · 1675 x 1080 mm
Executed c.1957–8

Collections
Julian Hartnoll, London;
Stanley Seeger and Christopher Cone, to 2014.

Literature

Exhibited
amongst the domestic clutter of the kitchen; as with other compositions of the period, such as Jean and Still Life in Front of a Window, now in Southampton City Art Gallery, Bratby depicts her naked. At the centre of the composition is their son, David, seated in his highchair with a baby mouli prominently placed on its tray. Bratby has deliberately altered the perspective to reveal the interior of the mouli with its handle and blade. On the floor are a number of packages of familiar children’s food – Farley’s rusks, Groats and Farex – along with a child’s bottle; the linoleum floor itself is a carefully drawn mosaic of geometric shapes. The ambitious, boldly drawn, black chalk composition echoes Bratby’s technique as a painter, with areas of deep shadow achieved by heavy working. Whether Bratby was conscious of the social and political ambitions ascribed by commentators such as Berger, his work was designed as a rejection of contemporary British art; his realism was seen as more egalitarian than both the neo-romanticism of John Piper and John Minton and the abstractions of Ben Nicholson. Whether Bratby was conscious of the social and political ambitions ascribed by commentators such as Berger, his work was designed as a rejection of contemporary British art; his realism was seen as more egalitarian than both the neo-romanticism of John Piper and John Minton and the abstractions of Ben Nicholson.4 Whilst it was rapidly overshadowed by American abstract expressionism and pop art, Bratby and the other Kitchen Sink realists represented an important, if brief, moment in post-war British art and the present powerful drawing is perfect distillation of these ideas.

comparing Bratby’s rendition of a cornflake packet favourably with Velázquez’s Rokeby Venus. A major early painting, Still Life with Chip Frier, was purchased by the Tate Gallery in 1951. The term ‘kitchen sink realism’ was first used by David Sylvester in a review of the Beaux Arts Quartet. Writing in Encounter in December 1954 he noted that their work: ‘keeps us back from the studio to the kitchen’ and described their subjects as: ‘an inventory which includes everything from food and drink, every utensil and implement, the usual plain furniture and even babies’ nappies on the line. Everything but the kitchen sink! The kitchen sink too’. Sylvester also emphasised that these kitchens were ones ‘in which ordinary people cooked ordinary food and doubtless lived their ordinary lives.’ The term as it was initially applied to the work of Bratby, Derrick Greaves, Edward Middleditch and Jack Smith, was meant satirically and rejected by the artists themselves. But it soon had traction in describing their paintings of and more widely to characterise plays, novels and films whose working class protagonists railed against the banality of domestic convention. Kitchen sink drama was most famously embodied by John Osborne in his play Look Back in Anger of 1956, the publicity for which in turn coined the term ‘Angry young men’, but it was Sylvester’s description of Bratby’s paintings which has definitively described this cultural movement. Kitchen Sink reached its apogee in 1956 when the Beaux Arts Quartet were selected to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale. Bratby’s powerful drawing precisely crystallises this moment in British art. This kitchen scene executed with an expressionistic power suggests the new social realism praised by Berger. Jean Cooke is seen standing amongst the domestic clutter of the kitchen. Jean and Still Life in Front of a Window, now in Southampton City Art Gallery, Bratby paints her naked. At the centre of the composition is their son, David, seated in his highchair with a baby mouli prominently placed on its tray. Bratby has deliberately altered the perspective to reveal the interior of the mouli with its handle and blade. On the floor are a number of packages of familiar children’s food – Farley’s rusks, Groats and Farex – along with a child’s bottle; the linoleum floor itself is a carefully drawn mosaic of geometric shapes. The ambition, boldly drawn, black chalk composition echoes Bratby’s technique as a painter, with areas of deep shadow achieved by heavy working. Whether Bratby was conscious of the social and political ambitions ascribed by commentators such as Berger, his work was designed as a rejection of contemporary British art; his realism was seen as more egalitarian than both the neo-romanticism of John Piper and John Minton and the abstractions of Ben Nicholson.4 Whilst it was rapidly overshadowed by American abstract expressionism and pop art, Bratby and the other Kitchen Sink realists represented an important, if brief, moment in post-war British art and the present powerful drawing is perfect distillation of these ideas.

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Lowell Libson has over thirty-five years experience in dealing. Formerly he was a director of Leger Galleries and Managing Director of Spink-Leger Pictures. He is a member of the organising committee of Master Drawings & Sculpture London, a member of the executive committee of the Society of London Art Dealers and the Walpole Society and in 2011 was appointed a member of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest. The gallery’s research is led by Jonny Yarker who recently completed a PhD at the University of Cambridge and has a considerable reputation as a scholar of British painting and the Grand Tour. He has published widely and held academic fellowships in America, London, and most recently, Rome. Day to day management of the gallery is in the hands of Deborah Greenhalgh who has long and valuable experience in the art market.

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- Thomas Gainsborough’s Landscapes at the Holburne Museum, Bath, 2011;
- Constable Gainsborough Turner and the Making of Landscape at the Royal Academy, 2012;
- In 2014 sponsored the Wright of Derby exhibition at the Holburne Museum and supported a Dialogue with Nature at the Morgan Library, New York.

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