Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd

Recent Acquisitions 2026

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British Art

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Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd

RECENT ACQUISITIONS 2026

HEBE

Oil on canvas
50⅞ × 40⅜ inches · 1294 × 1026 mm
Painted *c.*1801

COLLECTIONS

Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807), Rome;
Listed in the posthumous inventory of Angelica Kauffman's Roman studio made in 1808: 'Un Qua[d]ro in tela d'Imperatore per alto rappresentante Eda [sic] con Giove trasformato in Aquila';
Johann Kauffman (1751–1829), cousin of the above, Rome;
Listed in the posthumous inventory of Johann Kauffman's Roman apartment made in 1829: 'Un Quadro di misura d'Imperatore per alto rappresentante Ebbe senza cornice';
Johann Kauffman (1781–1873), nephew of the above;
Maria Magdalena Vogler-Bächler (1804–1851), acquired from the Kauffman family *c.*1830;
Albertine Vogler-Sallmann (1850–1929), daughter of the above;
Alfred Ernst Sallmann (1888–1970), son of the above;
Galerie Fischer, Lucerne 6–9 June 1945, lot 1615, unsold;
Sallmann family until 2025;
Lowell Libson and Jonny Yarker Ltd. acquired from the above through H.W. Fichter Kunsthandel, Frankfurt.

LITERATURE

Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, Papers relating to the estates of Johann Kaufmann and Angelica Kauffman, acc. no.890237, Filippo Romagnoli, *Descrizione di tutto ciò, che vi è rinvenuto nell Abitazione ritenuta dalla defonta Angelica Koffman [sic] e chè come spettante all'Eredità della Medesima*, p.47;
Johann Christian Reinhardt, *Almanach aus Rom für Künstler und Freunde der Bildenden Kunst*, Leipzig, 1810, p.151;
Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, *Papers relating to the estates of Johann Kaufmann and Angelica Kauffman*, acc. no.890237, Inventory of Via San Nicolo Tolentino 47, 1829, pp.41–42;
Walter Hugelshofer, *Angelika Kauffmann*, exh. cat. Chur (Bündner Museum), 1941, no.19;
ed. Elisabeth von Gleichenstein, *"… und hat als Weib unglaubliches Talent" (Goethe). Angelika Kauffmann (1741–1807) und Marie Ellenrieder (1791–1863), Malerei und Graphik*, exh. cat. Konstanz (Rosgartenmuseum), 1992, p.158, no.21, colour repr. 10;
ed. by Bärbel Kovalevski, *Zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit. Künstlerinnen der Goethe-Zeit zwischen 1750 und 1850*, exh. cat. Gotha and Konstanz (Schlossmuseum Gotha and Rosgartenmuseum Konstanz), 1999, p.152, no. E 32, repr.;
Bettina Baumgärtel, *Angelika Kauffmann*, exh. cat. Düsseldorf, München and Chur (Kunstmuseum, Haus der Kunst and Bündner Museum), 1999, p.96 and p.435;
ed. Bettina Baumgärtel, *Angelika Kauffmann. Unbekannte Schätze aus Vorarlberger* Privatsammlungen, Munich, 2018, p.152, at no.77, Illus. 61.

EXHIBITED

Chur, Bündner Museum, *Angelika Kauffmann*, 1941, no.19;
Konstanz, Rosgartenmuseum, *"… und hat als Weib unglaubliches Talent" (Goethe). Angelika Kauffmann (1741–1807) und Marie Ellenrieder (1791–1863), Malerei und Graphik*, 1992, no.21;
Gotha, Schlossmuseum and Konstanz, Rosgartenmuseum, *Zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit. Künstlerinnen der Goethe-Zeit zwischen 1750 und 1850*, 1999, no. E 32;
Constance, Rosgarten Museum, long term loan, inv. no. L 3.

This imposing late painting by Angelica Kauffman is a powerful work of European neo-classicism, demonstrating Kauffman's inventiveness as a designer and facility as a painter. Left unfinished in Kauffman's Roman studio at her death, where it is first recorded in a posthumous inventory, this important work is little known, having remained in the same family collection since the mid-nineteenth century.

By her death in 1807 Kauffman was celebrated as one of the leading painters in Europe. Kauffman had achieved considerable success in Britain, exhibiting extensively at the Royal Academy of which she was a founder member. Born in Chur, Switzerland, the only child of the Austrian painter Johann Joseph Kauffman, in 1742 Kauffman's father moved his family to Italy where, her early biographers record that she rapidly distinguished herself as a prodigy of both music and art.[1] Kauffman decided to pursue a career as a painter and undertook a formal Grand Tour of Italy in 1759 before settling in Rome in 1763. There she was introduced into a circle of British neo-classical painters including Gavin Hamilton, Nathaniel Dance and Benjamin West. These contacts undoubtedly influenced her aspiration to create history paintings of classical, mythological and religious subjects, a rare ambition for a female artist at this date. Encouraged by her contacts with Anglo-Saxon painters, Kauffman travelled to London in 1766 where she met and was befriended by Joshua Reynolds who became instrumental in promoting her career. In London she established a profitable and celebrated portrait practice working for a fashionable clientele. But, as Wendy Wassyng Roworth has observed:

Angelica Kauffman *Hebe and the Eagle*
Etching · 8¼ × 6½ inches · 210 × 164 mm
Made in 1770

Domenico Cunego after Gavin Hamilton *Hebe*
Engraving · 15½ × 11¼ inches · 397 × 287 mm

'Kauffman was not able to achieve fully her high aspiration to produce large-scale history paintings.'[2]

In 1782 Kauffman retuned to Rome after marrying the Italian decorative painter Antonio Zucchi, who yielded his own career to manage his spouse's finances. Economics partly motivated their move, Meng's recent death and Batoni's slowing career were to position Kauffman as Rome's dominant portraitist, decisively secured by the 1783 commission to paint the Neapolitan royal family. Moreover, the explosion of the Grand Tour among the nobility of northern and eastern Europe opened vast new markets for the multilingual painter. Kauffman and Zucchi occupied grand quarters on via Sistina, formerly the studio of Mengs, at the top of the Spanish Steps. Kauffman therefore cast herself as the prime heir to the classicising tradition of Roman painting. But most importantly the return to Rome situated Kauffman at the creative centre of Europe in close proximity to the greatest collections of antiquities and old master paintings as well as a thriving, international community of painters. Re-established in Rome she could finally execute the ambitious historical compositions that she had been contemplating since the 1760s. With this in mind, Kauffman not only assembled an important collection of antiquities and modern paintings in her studio, but organised her well-known weekly *conversazioni*. These semi-public events brought together the cosmopolitan literary and artistic figures of late Settecento Rome, something that impacted on the expanding erudition of Kauffman's late work.[3] Kauffman's return to Italy was celebrated in verse by Ippolito Pindemonte in his epistle *Alla Signora Angelica Kauffmann dipintrice celeberrima a Roma*, which he published under the name Polidete Melpomenio. The poem describes how Minerva led Kauffman back to Rome to be a history painter.

The subject of *Hebe: The Cupbearer* emerged in the mid-eighteenth century as one of the key iconographical vehicles for neo-classicism: both as a guise for elite female portraiture and a subject in itself. Fashionable women were regularly shown dressed as Hebe, holding an ewer and feeding Zeus in the form of an eagle. It was a trend which encompassed artists as diverse as Jean-Marc Nattier and François-Hubert Drouais who depicted Marie-Antoinette as Hebe in a painting now in the Musée Condé in Chantilly. In Britain the conceit was used by Kauffman's mentor Joshua Reynolds in his monumental portrait of *Mrs Musters*, now in the Iveagh Bequest at Kenwood House and by George Romney in his portrait of *Elizabeth Warren, Viscountess Bulkeley* at the National Museum, Cardiff. Kauffman similarly explored the idea of showing sitters in the guise of antique deities or personifications, even using the guise of Hebe. But Kauffman was also interested in Hebe as a subject for an historical canvas.

In Greek mythology Hebe was the daughter of Zeus and Hera, the divine wife of Hercules and was associated with eternal youth, with the ability to restore youth to mortals. According to Philostratus, Hebe was the youngest of the gods and the one responsible for keeping them eternally young. As early as 1770 Kauffman produced a pair of etching and aquatint prints of *Juno* and *Hebe*. The print shows Hebe pouring nectar or ambrosia into a dish for Zeus in the guise of an eagle, who is shown perched

on an altar decorated with bucrania and swags. The print, published when Kauffman was in London, shows awareness of a design of the same subject published by Domenico Cunego in Rome in 1767. Cunego was reproducing a painting by Kauffman's friend and artistic mentor Gavin Hamilton. Hamilton's painting of *Hebe*, which similarly shows the goddess seated in profile feeding Zeus, had been painted in around 1765 and was similarly paired with a depiction of Juno. The first version of Hamilton's composition had been acquired by one of Kauffman's earliest and most important patrons Brownlow Cecil, 9th Earl of Exeter it was therefore a painting she would have known intimately and suggests it was a subject-matter being discussed whilst she was in Rome in the 1760s.[4]

Hamilton specialised in producing paintings of single-figure female personifications and historical heroines. In the late 1770s Hamilton painted two seated female figures embodying *Painting* and *Poetry* acquired by the British diplomat Sir William Hamilton, the paintings are now known only from a pair of engravings made in Rome by Raphael Morghen. Hamilton's works show the influence of seventeenth-century models, particularly the great depictions of Sibyls by Guercino and Domenichino in the Capitoline in Rome. Although no longer extant, these works, which would have been well known to Kauffman, offer important context for her own single-figure female deities and personifications showing both the veneration for seicento models and the enduring influence of Anton Raphael Mengs. Morghen was part of Kauffman's inner circle in Rome, engraving many of her works and marrying Domenica, the daughter of Giovanni Volpato and the subject of one of Kauffman's most spectacular late portraits. At the same moment, Kauffman was painting her ambitious depiction of Emma, Lady Hamilton as the Muse of Comedy.

Francesco Bartolozzi *Hebe*

Mezzotint and etching · 11½ × 9⅛ inches · 290 × 230 mm
Made in 1782
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1978.43.560.

Angelica Kauffman *Page from a sketch book No. 136 Idealised head of a woman*

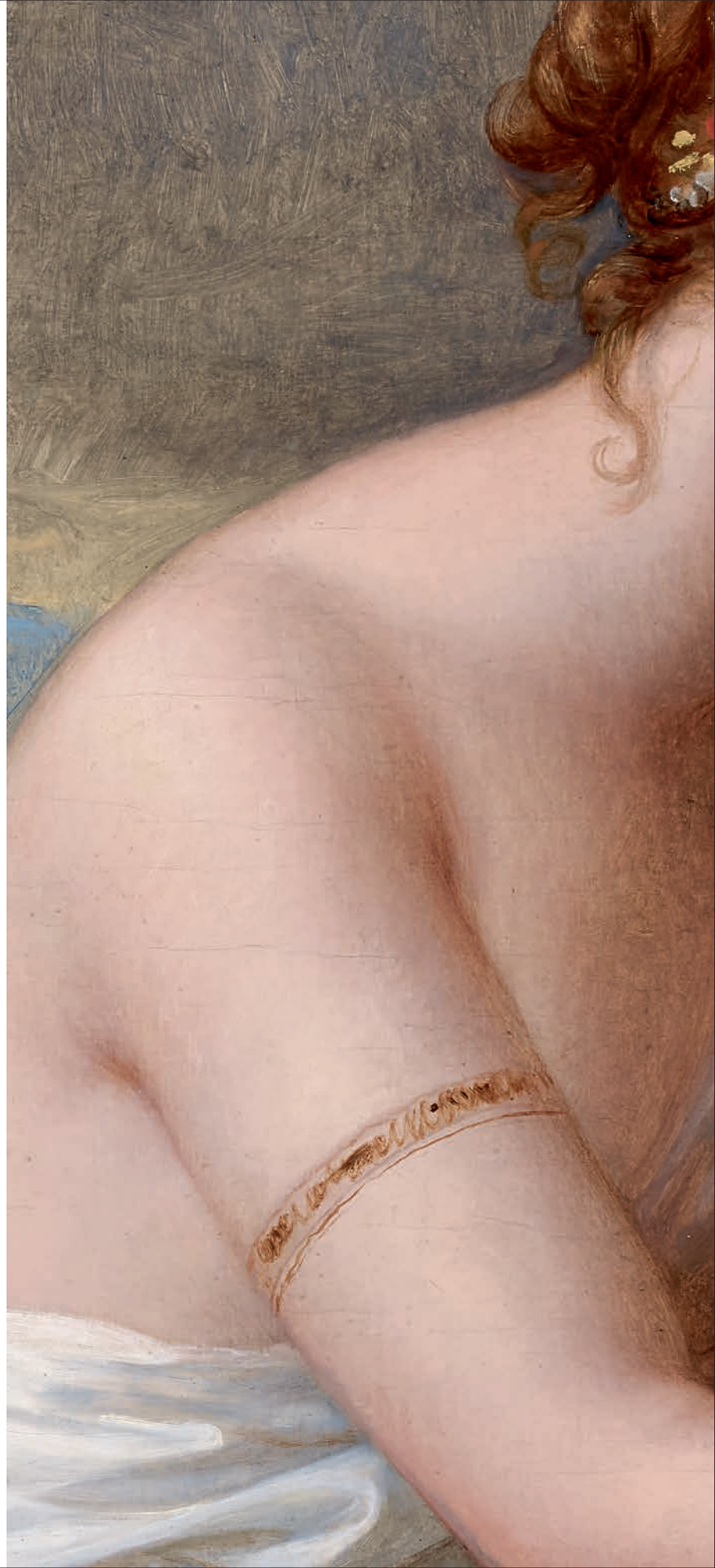
Black Chalk · 11¼ × 14½ inches · 280 × 368 mm
Drawn 1762–1766
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

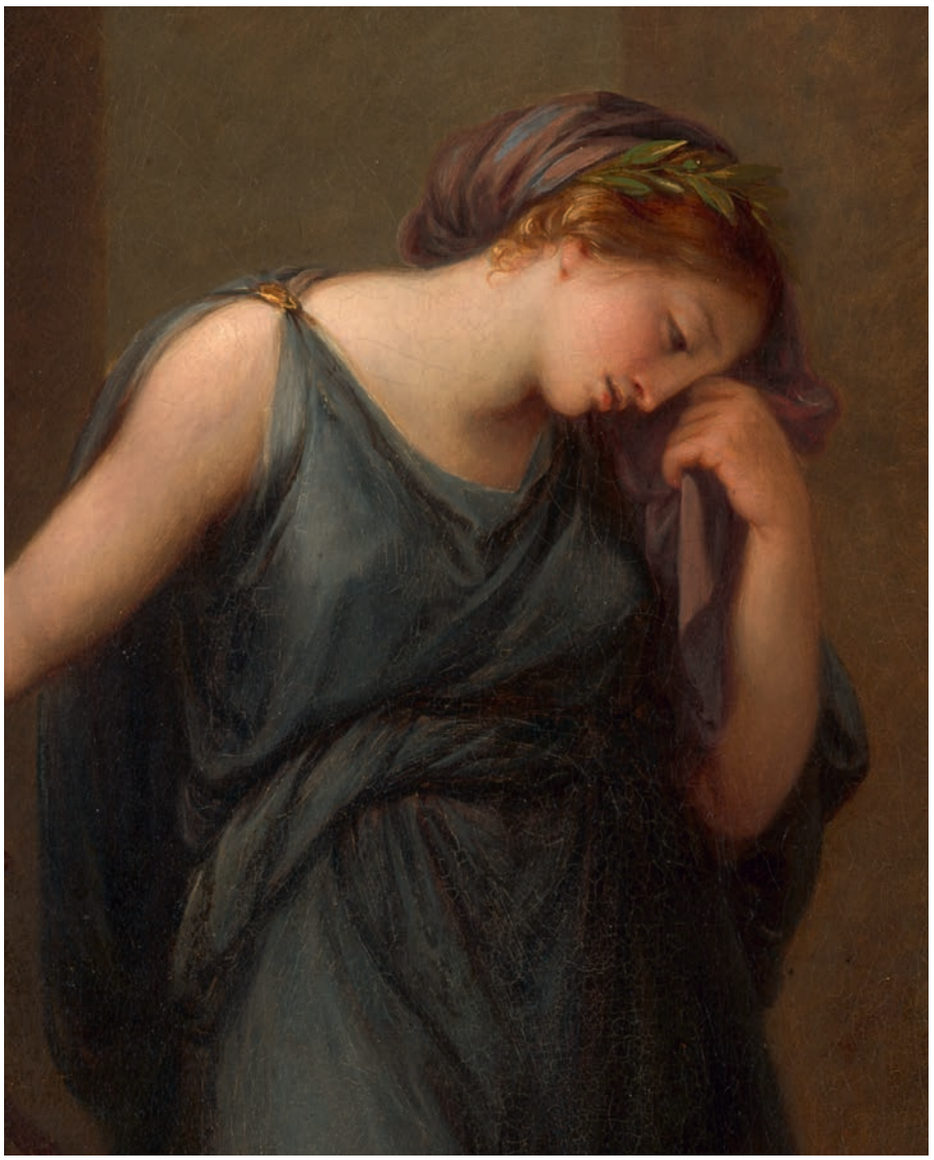
Kauffman maintained an interest in the subject-matter of Hebe producing a small oval painting which was engraved by Francesco Bartolozzi in 1782. Inscribed as being in the possession of the British consul in Livorno, Sir John Dick, Kauffman's painting shows a more decorative treatment of the subject.

In the present painting Kauffman makes a decisive move towards something more monumental and rigorously classical. In this painting Kauffman shows Hebe three-quarter length, seated in profile, dressed in a simple white peplos secured over the left shoulder, she is shown cradling a lekythos and feeding Zeus in the form of an eagle. The exquisitely painted figure represents Kauffman's female archetype with her straight nose, full lips and regular features, which were inspired by antique models. The head is modelled on the profile of an antique bust of Agrippina in the Capitoline Kauffman had first observed in Rome in the 1760s and appear in various variations throughout her most ambitious late works.

Kauffman's first design for this composition, preserved in a preparatory drawing now in a private collection, shows that she refined her original idea. In the drawing, Zeus is shown as a larger bird, wing outstretched behind Hebe. In the final painting, Kauffman reduces the size of the eagle, producing a bird which is closer in form to antique prototypes whilst retaining a degree of naturalism. Kauffman's friend and patron, Sir William Hamilton owned a celebrated ancient statue of an eagle which he eventually presented to the British Museum.

Kauffman must have been aware of the proliferation of artists treating Hebe as a subject in Rome in the last decade of the eighteenth century and this painting can be read, in part, as a response to these other works. In 1792 Élisabeth Vigée le Brun painted a portrait of Anne Pitt the daughter of Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford in the guise of Hebe. As Le Brun noted in her memoirs, the sitter: 'was sixteen and extremely pretty. I represented her as Hebe, on some clouds, holding in her hand a goblet from which an eagle was about to drink. I did the eagle from life, and I thought he would eat me. He belonged to Cardinal de Bernis. The wretched beast, accustomed to being in the open air – for he was kept on a chain in the courtyard – was so enraged at finding himself in my room that he tried to fly at me. I admit that I was dreadfully frightened.'[5] Le Brun arranged the sitter in a pose loosely based on Kauffman's own *Self-Portrait* of 1787 which she had recently admired in Florence. In 1795 Antonio Canova completed his figure of *Hebe* for the Venetian aristocrat Giuseppe Giacomo Albrizzi which imagines the goddess as the personification of youthful grace, floating on a cloud and carrying a gilt bronze ewer and cup. Canova's design was hugely celebrated by contemporaries resulting in at least four autograph versions. Kauffman's canvas was probably conceived around 1800, she combines the seated pose of Le Brun's *Hebe* with the gilt ewer and cup from Canova but produces a painting of total originality. Kauffman's Hebe is no frail maiden, she is a substantially composed figure, intent in her role as cupbearer of the gods. Kauffman conceives of Hebe as a manifestation of youthful, maidenly virtue and beauty, robed in vestal white,





Detail from Angelica Kauffman *Virgil writing his Epitaph at Brundisi*

Oil on canvas · 39 × 49½ inches · 991 × 1257 mm
Painted in 1785
Carnegie Museum of Art Formerly with Lowell Libson and Jonny Yarker Ltd

her hair dressed with a beautiful garland of flowers. Hebe was emblematic of eternal youth, and it is notable that she should have been chosen as a subject by the aging artist. Painted in Rome, this grand work can be read as a summation of Kauffman's singular neo-classical vision. The costumes, style and approach to the composition recall Kauffman's interest in a specific lineage of Roman painting from Raphael, through Guido Reni to Anton Raphael Mengs. Kauffman never outlined a theoretical position in print. However, the artist's biographer de Rossi, described the artist as 'la Pittrice delle Grazie'. In eighteenth-century terms, grace embodied the reason, erudition, judgment, and balance of her painting, aspects reinforced by her rational, learned, and virtuous personality.[6]

PROVENANCE

This painting remained unfinished in Kauffman's studio at her death in November 1807. The painting is first mentioned by the painter Johann Christian Reinhardt in his *Almanach aus Rom*. After describing Kauffman's funeral procession to Sant'Andrea delle Fratte, Reinhardt lists 'a fewer the finest works' left in her studio and available for sale, number 10 on the list is: 'Hebe und Jupiters Adler. Halbe Figur. Unvolendet.'[7] Its presence in Kauffman's studio at the time of her death is corroborated by the inventory of her estate made by the Roman notary Filippo Romagnoli made over several days in 1808. The 'Descrizione di tutto ciò, che vi è rinvenuto nell Abitazione ritenuta dalla defonta Angelica Koffman [sic] e chè come spettante all'Eredità della Medesima' lists her entire household with furniture and other furnishings on

47 unpaginated pages. The Hebe is listed in her studio: 'Un Qua[d]ro in tela d'Imperatore per alto rappresentante Eda [sic] con Giove trasformato in Aquila – 120.'[8]

Kauffman's heir was her first cousin, the printseller Johann Kauffman who had lived with her in Rome since 1792.[9] In her will, drawn up in 1803, Kauffman stated: 'I am leaving the paintings that will be in my study at the time of my death to my cousin Johann Kaufmann in order to sell them as best as possible and then to share the proceeds with his brother Kasimir or one of his most needy sisters, if he so wishes.'[10] Shortly after Kauffman's death, Johann offered a collection of her paintings to Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria through his agent, the painter Friedrich Müller. Ludwig had sat to Kauffman in 1807 for a spectacular full-length portrait now in the Neue Pinakothek in Munich. Amongst the works offered to Ludwig in January 1808 was: '5. Hebe welche den Adler des Jupiters füttert, beynahe lebensgrß, doch nicht völlig vollendet.'[11]

Ludwig declined to purchase the painting. Müller tried again in March 1810 offering the Hebe at the discounted price of 60 sequins.[12]

Johann Kauffman died in 1829 and the painting is recorded in the posthumous inventory of his house on Via di San Nicolo Tolentino just off Piazza Barberini: '43 Un Quadro di misura d'Imperatore per alto rappresentante Ebbe senza cornice Scudi tre.'

Six months after Johann Kauffman's death, in a letter dated 16 August 1829, his nephew, also called Johann, a clockmaker from Dornbirn offered the painting with a group of works by Kauffman to the Ferdinandeum Museum in Innsbruck.[13] Offered for 240 guilders, the museum declined and the painting remained with the Kauffman family in Dornbirn.

The painting was eventually acquired by Maria Magdalena Vogler-Bächler. Bächler's parents were wealthy, her mother was the heiress to a prominent family of wine merchants and her father Johann Ulrich Bächler was the builder of the Sallmann house in Kreuzlingen. The painting passed to her grandson Alfred Ernst Salmann who lent the painting to Chur in 1941 for the exhibition mounted on the bicentenary of Kauffman's birth. Sallmann consigned the painting to auction in Lucerne shortly after the war in June 1945 where it failed to sell. The painting was put on long-term loan at the Rosgarten Museum, Konstanz by Sallmann's descendants. The painting is therefore on the market for the first time since 1945 having been in the same family collection since the 1830s.

NOTES

1. Giovanni Gherardo De Rossi, *Vita di Angelica Kauffmann Pittrice*, Florence, 1810, pp.16–17.
2. Wendy Wassyng Roworth, 'Between 'Old Tiber' and 'Envious Thames': The Angelica Kauffman Connection', in eds. David Marshall, Susan Russell and Karin Wolfe, *Roma Britannica: Art Patronage and Cultural Exchange in Eighteenth-Century Rome*, London, 2011, p.294.
3. 'Wendy Wassyng Roworth, 'The Residence of the Arts': Angelica Kauffman's place in Rome', in eds. Paula Findlen, Wendy Wassyng Roworth and Catherine M. Sama, *Italy's Eighteenth Century*, Stanford, 2009, pp.151–171.
4. Françoise Forster-Hahn, 'After Guercino or After the Greeks? Gavin Hamilton's Hebe: Tradition and Change in the 1760s', *The Burlington Magazine*, June 1975, vol.117, no.867, pp.364–371.
5. Ed. Lionel Strachey, *Memoirs of Madame Vigée Le Brun*, New York, 1903, p.57.
6. Giovanni Gherardo de Rossi writing in *Memorie per le belle Arti*, April 1785, p.LIV.
7. Johann Christian Reinhardt, *Almanach aus Rom für Künstler und Freunde der Bildenden Kunst*, Leipzig, 1810, p.151
8. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, Papers relating to the estates of Johann Kaufmann and Angelica Kauffman, acc. no.890237, Filippo Romagnoli, *Descrizione di tutto ciò, che vi è rinvenuto nell Abitazione ritenuta dalla defonta Angelica Koffman [sic] e chè come spettante all'Eredità della Medesima*, 1808, p.47.
9. Johann Kauffman (1751–1829) has sometimes been confused with the Austrian sculptor Johann Peter Kauffman (1764–1829) a distant relative who also practiced in Rome. See Wendy Wassyng Roworth, 'The Angelica Kauffmann inventories: An Artist's Property and Legacy in Early Nineteenth-century Rome,' *Getty Research Journal*, no.7 (January 2015), p.161.
10. Franz Gebhard Metzler, 'Angelika Kauffmann, Skizze mit Testament der Angelica Kaufmann welches dieselbe den 17. Juni 1803 in italienischer Sprache sigillierter in die Acten des Herrn Bartolo römischen Notars abgegeben hat', in *Vorarlberger Volkskalender* 57, Bregenz 1907, p. 26.
11. Bettina Baumgärtel, *Angelika Kauffmann*, exh. cat. Düsseldorf, München and Chur (Kunstmuseum, Haus der Kunst and Bündner Museum), 1999, p.96.
12. Bettina Baumgärtel, *Angelika Kauffmann*, exh. cat. Düsseldorf, München and Chur (Kunstmuseum, Haus der Kunst and Bündner Museum), 1999, p.435.
13. Gert Ammann, 'Ich Maira Angelica Kaufmann von Schwarzenberg in Bregenzerwald Konstanzer Kirchensprengel (Aus Zufall in Chur in Graubünden geboren)' Zur Geschichte der Erwerbungen von Werken der Angelika Kauffmann im Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck, *Handschriftliche Dokumente im Vereinsarchive u in der Bibliothek in Wiss*, Innsbruck, 2012, p.147.

MARIA COSWAY 1759–1838

THE DEATH OF MISS GARDINER

Pen and ink with gouache and watercolour on laid paper · 7⅛ × 8⅜ inches · 183 × 213 mm
Painted 1789

COLLECTIONS

Captain Carlo Prayer (1826–1900) [Lugt 2044];
Bonham's, Knightsbridge, London, 21st November 2012, lot 47;
Private Collection;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

LITERATURE

Paris A. Spies-Gans, *A Revolution on Canvas: The Rise of Women Artists in Britain and France 1760–1830*, New Haven and London, 2022, pp.139–141, reproduced.

This rare, rapidly worked study was made by Maria Cosway in preparation for one of her most famous and successful exhibition works, *The Death of Miss Gardiner*, now in the collection of the Musée de la Révolution française, Vizille. Feted by artists, patrons and politicians across the Continent and an object of fascination to many of the men she met, Maria Cosway was one of the most considerable artistic figures in late eighteenth-century Europe. Thomas Jefferson, who met Cosway in Paris in 1786, described her as having 'qualities and accomplishments, belonging to her sex, which might form a chapter apart for her: such as music, modesty, beauty, and that softness of disposition which is the ornament of her sex and charm of ours.' Jefferson addressed a singular dialogue to Cosway, 'between my Head and my Heart', a frank admission of his romantic feelings for her. Like Angelica Kauffman and Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun, Cosway had to navigate the interest paid to her as an exhibiting painter and attention paid to her as an accomplished woman. Her marriage to the successful miniaturist Richard Cosway, resulted in her career being severely circumscribed and the present fluid study is one of very few that survive, giving unusual insight into her processes as an artist.

Maria Cosway was born in Florence, the daughter of Charles Hadfield, a member of the English Grand Tour community, who ran a celebrated hotel on Lungarno Capponi in the city. Her childhood was overshadowed by tragedy, when her elder siblings were murdered by a deranged maidservant. Stephen Lloyd has suggested that this event 'profoundly affected her and can be seen as a major influence on her reaction to the early loss of her only child, Louisa, her intense Catholicism, and her later career as a pioneer of girls' education.' Brought up in the milieu of Grand Tour Italy, Cosway was encouraged by the male artists she encountered, spending time in Rome, where she later remembered that she: 'had the opportunity of knowing all the first living Artists intimately; Battoni, Mengs, Maron, and many English Artists. Fusely

Maria Cosway *The Death of Miss Gardiner*
Oil on canvas · 39¾ × 50 inches · 1010 × 1270 mm
Painted in 1789
Musée de la Révolution française. Inv. MRF 1994–30.

with his extraordinary visions struck my fancy. I made no regular study, but for one year and a half only went to see all that was high in painting and sculpture.'[1]

In 1779 Maria moved to London where she married the successful miniaturist, Richard Cosway. The 1780s saw the Cosways establish themselves at the heart of fashionable London, close to the prince of Wales and financially hugely successful. Maria Cosway exhibited a series of ambitious paintings at the Royal Academy from 1781 until 1789. Artistically inventive and iconographically diverse, Cosway illustrated scenes from Homer and Virgil to Pope and Ossian.

In 1789 Cosway exhibited *The Death of Miss Gardiner* at the Royal Academy, the painting illustrated a contemporary scene commemorated in a poem by George Townshend, 1st Marquess Townshend and published in 1788 in an anthology compiled by John Bell. Townshend described the tragic final moments of his niece Florinda Gardiner, daughter of Luke Gardiner, 1st Viscount Mountjoy. Sensing her own imminent death, she had a vision of her deceased mother and:

'As late FLORINDA on her death bed lay …
The sun meridian glimmer'd to her eye,
And panting breath announc'd her end was nigh:
She turn'd, and smiling ask'd, 'When shall I die?
In realms above my long-mourn'd mother join?
See, See her arms stretch'd out to meet with mine!
Adieu, pure SOUL! With rapture take thy flight,
Quit thy dark mansion for *Eternal Light!*-
For bliss eternal! Whilst at Heaven's gate
Thy sister Angels thy arrival wait,
Swift to conduct thee to thy parent's breast;
For *Heav'n* has heard, and granted they request.'

The present sketch is Cosway's first idea for the painting. Florinda is shown in a loose white gown, seated with her aunt, Lady Townshend. In the background, Cosway has introduced a standing figure, possibly Florinda's spectral mother. Worked rapidly in ink, Cosway has organised the principal figures in broad, confident lines, working and reworking elements as the composition evolved, Cosway has then applied opaque washes to give a sense of the tonal contrasts at work. In the sketch, Cosway places the emphasis on Florinda's aunt, comforting and entreating her niece. The finished exhibition is more conventionally arranged, Florinda is shown lying down, her arm pointing to a heavenly light being consoled by her aunt in profile. Cosway's sketch affords rare insight into her artistic process, allowing us to observe the evolution of the composition.

NOTES

1. Maria Cosway writing in an autobiographical letter to Sir William Cosway. Quoted in: Stephen Lloyd, *Richard & Maria Cosway: Regency Artists of Taste and Fashion*, exh. cat. Edinburgh (National Gallery of Scotland), 1995, p.42.

ANGELICA KAUFFMAN 1741–1807

THREE DESIGNS FOR FRONTISPIECES FOR BELL'S *POETS OF GREAT BRITAIN*

Pencil, pen and grey ink, grey and brown wash, heightened with white
Each 4¼ × 2¾ inches · 108 × 70 mm
Drawn 1780–1782

CHURCHILL
Inscribed: *Infancy Straining backward from the breasts./And the fond Father sits on t'other/-side/Laughs at his moods & views his-/-Spleen with pride*
Engraved by Francesco Bartolozzi, published by John Bell, September 23rd 1780.

SAVAGE
Inscribed: *SAVAGE./Content from Noise & court/retires/And smilinsits while Muses/tune their Lyres*
Engraved by Francesco Bartolozzi, published by John Bell, June 4th 1779.

LYTTLETON
Inscribed: *Young Damon came unknowing where he-/stray'd/Full of the Image of his beauteous maid*
Engraved by Jean Marie Delattre, published by John Bell, December 31st 1781.

COLLECTIONS
Christie's, London, *British Art on Paper*, 28 November 2000, lot 51;
Private collection;
Woolley & Wallis, 3rd September 2025, lot. 539; Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

These three drawings were made by Angelica Kauffman in preparation for a remarkable publication, John Bell's *The Poets of Great Britain*. This inexpensive, well-produced pocket series made poetry widely available and eventually ran to 109 volumes. Bell, a serial entrepreneur and innovator, employed a roster of celebrated artists to illustrate the frontispieces for each of his major publishing ventures. Kauffman was responsible for a number of the frontispiece drawings for *The Poets of Great Britain* including for the volumes dedicated to Richard Savage, George, Lord Lyttleton and Charles Churchill. Kauffman's carefully worked drawings express, in miniature, her skills as a designer: compressing legible narrative into a circumscribed format. Made on the eve of her departure from Britain, these wonderfully fluid and exquisitely rendered drawings underscore the importance of the London print trade to Kauffman and her European reputation.

Kauffman had been born in Chur, Switzerland, the only child of the Austrian painter Johann Joseph Kauffman. In 1742 Kauffman's father moved his family to Italy where, her early biographers record that she rapidly distinguished herself as a prodigy of both music and art.[1] Kauffman decided to pursue a career as a painter and undertook a formal Grand Tour of Italy in 1759 before settling in Rome in 1763. There she was introduced into a circle of British neo-classical painters including Gavin Hamilton, Nathaniel Dance and Benjamin West. Encouraged by her contacts with Anglo-Saxon painters, Kauffman travelled to London in 1766 where she met and was befriended by Joshua Reynolds who became instrumental in promoting her career. In London she established a profitable and celebrated portrait practice working for a fashionable clientele.

It was in London that Kauffman also formed important relationships with engravers and print publishers. In 1772 the engraver William Wynne Ryland commissioned a mezzotint after Kauffman entitled *Queen Charlotte Raising the Genius of the Fine Arts*. Ryland and Kauffman formed a particularly close association, Ryland producing a series of stipple engravings

after Kauffman's works. These highly decorative prints were widely disseminated and imitated contributing to the popularity of Kauffman as a designer. Kauffman joined a roster of notable artists in contributing work for John Bell's *The Poets of Great Britain*, John Hamilton Mortimer produced some 41 designs with others being made by Thomas Stothard, Edward Edwards, Biagio Rebecca and Giovanni Battista Cipriani. Each frontispiece follows the same format: a scene illustrative of a poem is contained

in a roundel, above a cartouche is left for the name of the poet and below a second cartouche contains the lines of the poem being illustrated. Kauffman's drawings, like those by Mortimer, are the same size as the plates, which were engraved by leading artists. In the case of Kauffman's three designs, two by Jean Marie Delattre and the third by Francesco Bartolozzi.

Kauffman's elegant drawings demonstrate her ability to communicate complex, multi-figural action on a small scale. The first illustrates a passage from *The Wanderer* by Richard Savage, showing the Wanderer seated amongst the muses. The second illustrates lines from *Gotham* by Charles Churchill, with a dynamic and compact family scene. The third illustrates a line from *The Progress of Love* by George, Lord Lyttleton and shows the shepherd Damon, abandoning his flock to contemplate his love. Each of the drawings is worked in ink and wash over black chalk and is the same size as the published print. These drawings underscore how important the print trade was to Kauffman as her biographer noted of one particularly popular composition: 'the prints … circulated all over Europe. In the elegant manufactures of London, Birmingham &c. it assumed an incalculable variety of forms and dimensions, and was transferred to numerous articles of all sorts and sizes, from a watch-case to a tea-waiter.'

NOTES

1. Giovanni Gherardo De Rossi, *Vita di Angelica Kauffmann Pittrice*, Florence, 1810, pp.16–17.

BOOTH GREY 1740–1802

DIANTHUS GLAUCUS: MOUNTAIN PINK

Pencil and watercolour collage on black prepared paper
Inscribed on a label attached to the reverse: 'Diantus glaucus/Mountain Pink' and numbered 'No 38' Excise Duty Charge Stamp, pre-1768
10⅛ x 7 inches · 287 × 178 mm
Made *c.*1785

COLLECTIONS

Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, London;
Anne H. Bass, acquired from the above in May 1988;
Bass sale, Christe's, New York 4–18 June 2025, lot.13 (as Mary Delany);
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

This remarkable paper mosaic was made by the amateur artist Booth Grey, inspired by the botanical collages of his friend Mary Delany. Formerly attributed to Delany herself, this work can be identified as having originated from an album of Grey's botanical studies which are now principally in the collection of the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven. A younger son of the Earl of Stamford, Booth was a politician and amateur artist of considerable talent who was closely connected to Delany and her circle. The finely wrought collage is made from pieces of cut paper, attached to a backing sheet of black painted paper labelled on the verso with the name of the plant depicted. This singular method of decoupage was developed by Mary Delany in the 1770s, both Delany and Grey produced detailed and botanically accurate depictions of plants, using a range of papers and hand colouring. Delany created a sequence of 985 works which she called 'paper mosaiks', collected together in ten volumes, her *Flora Delanica* is now in the British Museum. Grey's collage, which was probably made under Delany's supervision, exemplifies this innovative technique and singular confluence of art and science.

Booth Grey was the son of Harry, 4th Earl of Stamford and Lady Mary Booth, heiress to her father, George Booth, 2nd Earl of Warrington. His older brother, George, was married in 1763 to Lady Henrietta Cavendish-Bentinck, daughter of Margaret, Duchess of Portland. By this date the Duchess of Portland had turned her Buckinghamshire house, Bulstrode, into a remarkable museum, forming the largest natural history collection in the country. Bulstrode with its myriad collections and specimens was known as 'the hive' for the intense work done by a team of scientists, these included the Swedish botanist, Daniel Solander who was employed as a curator. As Horace Walpole noted: 'few men have rivalled Margaret Cavendish in the mania of collecting, and perhaps no woman. In an age of great collectors she rivalled the greatest.' Mary Delany had been an intimate friend of the duchess since their youth and after she was widowed in the 1770s she spent protracted periods at Bulstrode. She began by making her innovative collages from specimens collected by the duchess, but gradually was given unusual or rare plants by others. Delany made collages from four specimens given to her by Booth Grey, these included one in May 1777 and four in April 1779. The specimens from Grey include an Anemone Hortensis that is recorded as coming from 'Dr Fothergill's garden', this implies Booth was sufficiently well-regarded as a plantsman by this date to collect specimens from John Fothergill's botanic garden at West Ham in Essex. Fothergill had sponsored Sydney Parkinson the first European artist to visit Australia, New Zealand and Tahiti and William Bartram, the American botanist and had one of the most celebrated collections of plants in the country. There is some evidence that Grey was both aware and interested in the correct classification of plants, his own copy of John Hill's *Eden: of A compleat Body of Gardening* of 1773 has the plates corrected in Grey's hand to include their new Linnaean classification.[1]

Grey's collages show that he was clearly familiar with Delany's technique. We know Delany had students, including a Miss Jennings: 'a sensible agreeable, and

Mary Delany *Dianthus Arenarius, from an album (Vol.III, 79); Cheddar Pink. 1779*

Collage of coloured papers, with bodycolour and watercolour, on black ink background
10⅞ × 7⅛ inches · 276 × 182 mm

ingenious woman a pupil of mine in the paper mosaick work', several of Delany's late collages are inscribed as having been completed by Jennings. Grey we know was a talented artist, he engraved a series of prints, bound sets of which survive in several collections.[2] The present specimen shows both intimate knowledge of Delany's innovative technique and remarkable dexterity. The Dianthus is constructed with finely cut pieces of paper, coloured with watercolour and carefully stuck on a sheet of paper painted black. The precision, technique and positioning of the flower on the page all suggest that Grey was taught by Delany herself.

The Grey mosaics were the subject of sustained analysis in preparation for the 2009 exhibition *Mary Delany & her circle*, held at the Yale Center for British Art. Kohleen Reeder, suggested from the internal evidence that the collages date from the 1790s. Peter Bower found evidence that Grey used many of the same papers as Delany, with several showing an Excise Duty Charge Stamp that dates to before 1786.[3] This raises the possibility that the collages were begun earlier than originally assumed, perhaps as early as April 1779 when Booth presents Delany with four specimens to cut. Mary Delany stopped working on her mosaics in 1784 when her eyesight failed and this may have stimulated Grey to begin cutting his own specimens. Reeder raised doubts about precisely who cut the Grey mosaics, suggesting several hands were at work. This may be the case, but Grey seems likely to be the principal hand. The Yale album is specifically inscribed '98 plants done by the Honble. Booth Grey' and there is abundant evidence of Grey's interest in botany, friendship with plantsmen, artistic accomplishments and close relationship with Delany herself.

NOTES

1. Ed. Mark Laid and Alicia Weisberg-Roberts, *Mrs Delany & Her Circle*, exh. cat. New Haven (Yale Center for British Art), 2009, p.234, n.12.
2. Bound groups of Grey's engravings survive in the collection of the Lewis Walpole Library, Farmington (Folio 75 A1325754) and Yale Center for British Art, New Haven (Accession number: B1977.14.20049V).
3. Ed. Mark Laid and Alicia Weisberg-Roberts, *Mrs Delany & Her Circle*, exh. cat. New Haven (Yale Center for British Art), 2009, p.240.

FRANCIS TOWNE 1739–1816

VIGNA MARTINELLI

Pen and ink and grey wash
7¼ × 10⅝ inches · 185 × 270 mm
Inscribed by the artist verso: 'Martinelli's Vineyard No. 10'
Drawn 1780

COLLECTIONS

Bequeathed by the artist to James White (1744–1825), Exeter, in 1816;
John Herman Merivale (1779–1844), Barton Place, Exeter,
Towne's residuary legatee;
Maria Sophia Merivale (1853–1928) and Judith Ann Merivale (1860–1945), granddaughters of the above, (sold by Judith Merivale c.1934–35);
Squire Gallery, London, by 1935;
Private collection, UK, to 2010;
Lowell Libson Ltd;
Private collection, New York to 2025

LITERATURE

Richard Stephens, Francis Towne online catalogue, cat. no.FT225.

EXHIBITED

London, Squire Gallery, February 1936.

Francis Towne's sequence of monochrome drawings of Rome and its environs have long been regarded as some of the most innovative responses to Italy made in the eighteenth century. This beautifully wrought ink wash drawing captures Towne's singular approach, ostensibly showing an anonymous view in the Campagna, Towne revels in the effects and clarity of the Italian light. Saturated ink washes cast melting shadows whilst details of vegetation are carefully delineated with precise pen lines. The drawing is labelled on the verso 'Martinelli's Vineyard' and it is with this kernel of information that we can build a hugely consequential story about artistic sociability and the associational values of certain sites for British artists in Rome during the eighteenth century.

When Francis Towne travelled to Rome in 1780 at the age of forty, he joined a colony of British painters who were exploring the Italian countryside and forging a new mode of landscape painting. Towne followed John Downman and Joseph Wright of Derby to Italy, whose ingenuous naturalism influenced his own drawing style. His stay coincided with John 'Warwick' Smith, William Pars and Thomas Jones who were all producing candid plein air studies, whilst it is difficult to establish a chain of influence, it is clear that this group of landscape draughtsman were all sharing ideas and travel tips. Towne, in his turn, developed a lucid style which relied on the use of flat washes and precise delineation of forms. This radical style was not fully appreciated by collectors or scholars until the early twentieth century.

Towne left a remarkable group of his Roman watercolours to the British Museum and they demonstrate how assiduous he was in surveying the periphery of the city. Towne made studies of sections of the old Aurelian walls, portions of crumbling aqueduct and streets bounded by the garden walls of patrician villas, relishing the crumbling plaster and glimpses of cultivated vegetation beyond. The present drawing follows this format, capturing an apparently unremarkable stretch of the Campagna with an anonymous villa on the horizon. Towne's inscription identifies the view as a site of central importance amongst the community of British artists in Rome at this date. We get a useful description of the Vigna Martinelli from Jones, writing in the summer of 1778:

'During the last … Months, I made many very agreeable excursions to a Villa near *S'o Agnese* without the *Porta Pia* – This Villa was situated upon a gentle Ascent which commanded a view of the City of *Rome* on One hand, and the *Campagna* with the *Appenine* Mountains on the Other – it belonged to Sig're *Martinelli*, a Roman, of good family, but rather reduced in Circumstances – He had originally a large extent of Vineyards about it, but had been obliged to dispose of the greater part to Barazzi the banker who had built himself a handsome Country House in the Neighbourhood – With this Sig're *Martinelli*, little Couzins the Landscape Painter lodged in Rome and as he was not well in health, when the Weather was favourable, resided at this Villa for the benefit purpose – Here I made some studies in Oil of the surrounding Scenery and was accommodated with a nice Poney whenever I pleased to take an airing with little Cousins and his JackAss.'[1]

Towne was almost certainly staying at the Vigna Martinelli in 1780, including in

the British Museum watercolours a view of the property's gate, dated 30th October and a view from the villa on 2nd November, showing the 'handsome Country House' built by the banker Francesco Barazzi. The 2nd November watercolour is also numbered '10', suggesting that the view in the present drawing was an alternative candidate for inclusion in the British Museum sequence. We can infer from descriptions such as that provided by Jones and the surviving visual evidence, that Vigna Martinelli was of some significance for British artists. The villa was located along the Via Nomentana, the Consular road which runs northeast out of Porta Pia, across the river Aniene towards the Sabine hills. Jones made a number of oil sketches of the area – including of a cave near Sant'Agnese fuori le mura. Jones was staying at the villa with John Robert Cozens, who also made a number of dramatic views of the cavern close to Sant'Agnese.

Further views of the Vigna Martinelli and its environs were made by John 'Warwick' Smith, confirming its ubiquity as a place of resort amongst British artists.[2]

In this drawing Towne again shows the villa built by Barazzi, but unlike the British Museum view, Towne eschews strict topography, instead concentrating on the complex play of light through the vegetation in the foreground. In this small, powerful sheet the landscape of the Campagna becomes a foil for Towne's sophisticated delineation and fluid monochrome washes.

NOTES

1. Paul Oppé, 'Memoirs of Thomas Jones', *The Walpole Society*, 1946–1948, vol.32, p.73.
2. A watercolour in the Oppé collection now in the Tate shows the same complex of buildings and is inscribed 'about 2 miles without the Porta Pia' and dated February 1778. See London, Tate Britain, T08486.

Francis Towne *Martinelli Vineyard*
Pen and grey ink and watercolour
8¼ × 10⅝ inches · 209 × 269 mm
Drawn in 1780

HUGH DOUGLAS HAMILTON 1739–1808

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Pastel on paper
9⅞ × 8⅛ inches · 250 × 205 mm
Drawn *c.*1792

COLLECTIONS

Private collection, London;
Cheffins, Cambridge, 26th March 2025, lot. 177;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

LITERATURE

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800*, online, cat. no J.375.221357

This virtuosic pastel was made by Hugh Douglas Hamilton shortly after his return from over a decade's residence in Italy, when he reestablished himself in Dublin, taking a studio at 20 Frederick Street, later 14 Clare Street. Once he was back in Ireland, as he told his friend and correspondent, Antonio Canova in 1793, Hamilton largely abandoned pastel to work in oil. This exquisite portrait therefore belongs to a small, highly refined group of pastels that Hamilton made of elite Dublin sitters before he turned from pastel to oil. Housed in a frame by Joel Hulbert of 12 Camden Street, Dublin, the pastel can be closely associated with a group of portraits of the extended La Touche family that Hamilton made in around 1792.

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 pastel portraits were immensely popular. Their popularity rested on a combination of the luminous surface quality he achieved, the speed of execution, portability and low cost. In 1779 he travelled to Italy accompanied by his wife Mary and daughter Harriott. After time spent in Venice and Florence, the Hamiltons settled in Rome where they were at the centre of a cosmopolitan circle of artists, including the sculptors John Flaxman and Antonio Canova.

This unusually animated portrait shows the beautiful young sitter in modish costume, her white, diaphanous drape arranged behind her head; her hair is worn in ringlets and gathered around her head with a blue and white silk bandeau. The pastel itself is handled with remarkable skill. Hamilton has built up the features with minimal blending, refining with sharpened pastel to describe details such as the mole on the sitter's cheek. Hamilton has captured the sitter in a moment of animation, showing her slightly parted lips as if in mid conversation, it gives a rare kineticism to this unusually refined pastel portrait.

The sitter's costume and features, as well as Hamilton's conception recalls his portrait of Lady Cecilia Leeson, the wife of David La Touche IV. Shown wearing the same loose, white cotton chemise, abundant ringlets held in place with a bandeau and housed in identical frames, it is possible that the present portrait depicts her sister. Lady Cecilia Leeson was the daughter of Joseph Leeson, 1st Earl of Milltown from his third wife, Elizabeth French. Her sister, Lady Frances Leeson married another Irish aristocrat, Marcus Beresford, grandson of the 1st Earl of Tyrone in 1791.

The pattern of frame and the distinctive construction of the pastel are identical to documented works of members of the La Touche family, including a pair of portraits of David Digues La Touche III and his wife which retain the trade label for Joel Hulbert of 12 Camden Street, Dublin. In common with the La Touche pastels, the present work is drawn on paper laid down directly onto a wooden backboard, this backboard has then been secured to a metal plate. The metal plate was almost certainly designed to protect the pastel; Hamilton was fastidious in preserving the surface of his pastels from any interference.

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH 1727–1788

WOODED LANDSCAPE WITH HERDSMAN, COWS AND RUINED CASTLE

Pencil and wash on paper
10 3/16 × 14 1/8 inches · 259 × 359 mm
Drawn *c.*1759

COLLECTIONS

Guy Bellingham-Smith (1915–1938);
P. & D. Colnaghi, London;
Eric Sexton (1902–1980), purchased from the above in 1937;
Lowell Libson Ltd., London 2003;
Private collection to 2025

LITERATURE

Mary Woodall, *Gainsborough's Landscape Drawings*, London, 1939, cat. no.289;
John Hayes, *Drawings of Thomas Gainsborough*, New Haven and London, 1971, vol.I, cat no.227;
John Hayes and Lindsay Stainton, *Gainsborough Drawings*, exh. cat., Washington (National Gallery of Art), 1983, p.64

EXHIBITED

Washington, Fort Worth and New Haven, *Gainsborough Drawings*, 1983, cat. no.21;
London and New York, Lowell Libson Ltd., *Thomas Gainsborough: Themes and Variations, The Art of Landscape*, 2003, cat. no.2

This incisive drawing was made towards the end of Gainsborough's period of residence in Ipswich. Highly structured and elaborately composed, the drawing belongs to a small group of finished works Gainsborough made as he began to experiment with printmaking for the first time. Gainsborough spent seven years living in Ipswich, a town in his native Suffolk, during this time he filled a series of sketchbooks with rapid observations from nature. This compendium of plein air drawings formed the bedrock for Gainsborough's later practice, allowing him to produce an extended series of landscapes composed of naturalistic trees, vegetation, buildings and animals, but arranged to form idealised visions which contemporaries understood as being charged with profound emotion.

Gainsborough was born in Suffolk and there is a long tradition that associates his earliest landscapes with the flat scenery of East Anglia. Gainsborough's friend and obituarist, the Reverend Sir Henry Bate Dudley wrote in 1788 that: 'Nature was his teacher and the woods of Suffolk his academy; here he would pass in solitude his moments in making a sketch of an antiquated tree, a marshy brook, a few cattle, a sheep herd and his flock, or any other accidental objects that were present.'[1] In fact, this drawing, like the majority of Gainsborough's earliest landscape compositions, was made towards the end of the 1750s, after he had spent a period working in London in the circle of the second St Martin's Lane Academy. We know he moved back to Sudbury in 1748/9 and is recorded living in Ipswich by 1752.

At this date, Gainsborough's landscapes were inflected by his interest in seventeenth-century Dutch art. Gainsborough had a relationship with a dealer, Panton Betew, who made a living selling modern imitations of Dutch seventeenth-century landscape paintings.[2] During his training Gainsborough took part in the associated practices of the dealer restoring and 'improving' Dutch paintings; the 1762 sale of John Oldfield's collection includes a 'Dutch Landscape, repaired by Mr Gainsborough' and a painting by 'Wijnants the figures by Mr Gainsborough'.[3] The access to genuine Dutch landscapes of the seventeenth century offered a supplement to the young Gainsborough's formal training. This exposure evidently stimulated his activity as a painter producing landscape compositions heavily indebted to seventeenth-century models.[4] These were the paintings that Gainsborough would later refer to as 'my first imitations of little Dutch Landskips.'[5] The present drawing shows a wooded bank, with a partially concealed ruined castle, an open landscape traversed by a rutted, waterlogged track, cattle and a solitary herdsman. In its form and content this landscape recalls the work of Meindert Hobbema or Jan Wijnants.

Built up with soft, feathery pencil marks, this drawing demonstrates Gainsborough's mastery at creating a complex landscape composition. Gainsborough creates space around the central tree by leaving voids to suggest foliage, these areas of blank paper reading as volume against the densely worked pencil lines of the bank. The mark making shows that Gainsborough had already devised a system for communicating forms in an abbreviated, almost abstract way. The two cattle on the left, for example, are delineated with a few gestural lines and masses are indicated by a rapid system of

hatching. For Gainsborough these graphic refinements represented the summation of his practice as a landscape draughtsman. In a letter addressed to the amateur artist Constantine Phipps, who Gainsborough was teaching to draw, he makes an explicit distinction between observing nature and making this type of drawing: 'You know, Sir, I set you to this [sketch of foliage] merely to free your hand, but you are not to understand that for Drawing – therefore remember that there must be truth of hand, as well as freedom of hand in Drawing.'[6]

John Hayes has suggested that this drawing relates to Gainsborough's interest in printmaking. Only one of Gainsborough's prints from the 1750s survives, his etching of a *Wooded Landscape with Church, Cow and Figures*. Gainsborough's fluent line, mastery of tone and depth all suggest that he was thinking about the potential of printmaking, but it also points to Gainsborough's developing practice as a landscape draughtsman. This sheet is one of the earliest complete expressions of Gainsborough's interest in an ideal pastoral scene, where the single, seated herdsman is shown contemplating the landscape and his animals. This was a motif that would preoccupy Gainsborough for the rest of his career.

Karel du Jardin *Figures in a landscape*
Print · 4¾ × 6 16 inches · 121 × 154 mm
Made in 1658
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

NOTES

1. *The Morning Herald*, 8 August, 1788.
2. J. T. Smith, *Nollekens and His Times*, London, 1828, vol.I, pp.189–90.
3. A. Corri, 'Gainsborough's Early Career: New Documents and Two Portraits', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol.125, 1983, pp.212–16.
4. Susan Foister, *The Young Gainsborough*, exh. cat., London (National Gallery), 1997, pp.3–12.
5. John Hayes, *The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough*, New Haven and London, 2001, p.174.
6. Thomas Gainsborough to the Hon Constantine Phipps, later 2nd Baron Mulgrave, in ed. John Hayes, *The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough*, New Haven and London, 2001, p.92.

RIDERS ON A TRACK

Watercolour, pen and ink heightened with oil and white lead, varnished
8¼ × 12¼ inches · 210 × 311 mm
Drawn early 1770s

COLLECTIONS

Goodenough Earle (1700–1790), Barton Grange, Somerset, presumably a gift from the artist;
Francis Milner Newton (1720–1794), nephew of the above;
Josepha Sophia Newton (1764–1848), daughter of the above;
Francis Wheat Newton (1814–1895);
By inheritance to 1913;
Thomas Agnew & Sons Ltd, acquired in 1913;
M. Knoedler & Co, acquired by 1914;
George D. Widener jr. (1889–1971), Philadelphia, acquired from the above, 1914;
David David Gallery, Philadelphia, 1970;
Thomas Agnew & Sons Ltd, 1970;
Lady Drage (1890–1977), acquired in 1970;
Private collection, 1977;
Private collection, 1993 to 2025;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

LITERATURE

John Hayes and Lindsay Stainton, *Gainsborough drawings*, exhibition catalogue, Washington DC, 1983, pp.122–3;
John Hayes, 'Gainsborough Drawings: A Supplement to the Catalogue Raisonné', *Master Drawings*, vol. XXI, no.4, 1983, no.922, repr. pl.12.

EXHIBITED

New York, M. Knoedler & Co., *Drawings by Thomas Gainsborough*, 1914, no.16;
London, Agnew's, *98th Annual Exhibition of Water-colours and Drawings*, 1971, no.29;
Washington DC, National Gallery of Art, Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum, New Haven, Yale Center for British Art, *Gainsborough Drawings*, 1983, no.51;
London, World of Watercolours and Drawings, *Loan Exhibition: Gainsborough Drawings*, 1984;
London, Agnew's, *120th Annual Exhibition of English Watercolours and Drawings*, 1993, no.3.

This refined varnished mixed-media drawing was made by Gainsborough in 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. Gainsborough's varnished drawings also acted as vehicles for his experimentation with both techniques and materials. The method used in this drawing was outlined in a letter which gives a sense of his innovation. We know from contemporaries that these ambiguous drawings, translating the boundaries between drawing and painting, devoid of specific narrative, were highly prized by collectors and keenly discussed as works imbued with feeling. This sheet comes from an exceptional group of fourteen drawings Gainsborough gave to his friend Goodenough Earle of Barton Grange, Somerset. This carefully assembled series of drawings have long been recognised as consisting of Gainsborough's personal survey of his most refined work as a landscape draughtsman. As such, this concentrated, varnished sheet, belongs to a particularly important and well documented group of Gainsborough's landscape drawings and is an unusually bold, sophisticated 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 Gainsborough for his method. 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.'[1] 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, blue, 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't 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 border of your stretcher, 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 shaddows & 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 to) 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.'[2]

Gainsborough finally observed: 'varnish it 3 times with Spirit Varnish such as I sent you; though only Mastic & Venice Turpinetine 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 inventiveness, awareness of materials – note his use of paper not designed for drawing – and pursuit of innovative techniques to create novel effects in his landscape compositions. Gainsborough has used an off-white paper and then built up the composition, first adding the lead white, to lay in the white horse and side of the buildings and highlight on the fallen tree trunk in the foreground. As the letter suggests this was not chalk, technical analysis undertaken by Jonathan Derow of other varnished drawings has proved that it was dry white pigment, consistent with the Bristol lead white mentioned by Gainsborough.[3] The drawing could then be dipped in milk and washes applied to build up the landscape. This gradual process can be seen throughout the composition, which is made up of complex washes of watercolour articulated with pen and ink.

The motif of the drawing – riders on a country road – is typical of Gainsborough's landscape drawings and raises the question 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 sheet seems unlikely to have been prepared

with exhibition in mind, its presence amidst the highly edited group of drawings Gainsborough presented to Goodenough Earle marks it out as an exceptional example of its type.[4] The appeal of Gainsborough's varnished drawings lay in part in their relationship with Dutch seventeenth-century landscapes. From early in his youth Gainsborough had been fascinated 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.'[5] 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.

The fourteen drawings Gainsborough assembled and gave to Goodenough Earle are central for establishing our understanding of Gainsborough's own attitude towards his drawings.[6] We have no evidence that Gainsborough marketed his landscape drawings in his own lifetime, rather they existed in an economy of exchange and friendship, with Gainsborough's closest friends receiving carefully selected groups. What makes the group given to Goodenough Earle so exceptional is that they were drawn from across Gainsborough's career and include exceptional early works from the 1750s, such as the highly finished drawing of a market cart (National Gallery of Art, Washington) and watercolour of a *Woodland Scene* of about 1760 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). The group were exhibited by Knoedler in New York in 1914 and principally acquired by distinguished American collectors and a majority have subsequently been acquired by American museums.

This varnished drawing should be regarded as an exceptional work, not only within Gainsborough's oeuvre, but in our understanding 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.

Thomas Gainsborough *A herdsman with three cows by an upland pool*

Watercolour, ink and oil paint heightened with Bristol lead white · 8⅝ × 12⅜ inches · 219 × 313 mm
Cleveland Museum of Art (formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd)

NOTES

1. Ed. John Hayes, *The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough*, New Haven and London, 2001, p.110.
2. Ed. John Hayes, *The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough*, New Haven and London, 2001, pp.110–111.
3. Jonathan Derow, 'Gainsborough's Varnished Watercolour Technique', *Master Drawings*, vol.26, no.3, 1988, pp.259–71.
4. Gainsborough showed two large varnished landscapes at the Academy in 1772, traditionally 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 Ed. John Hayes, *The Letters of Thomas Gainsborough*, New Haven and London, 2001, p.94.
5. Edward Edwards, *Anecdotes of Painting*, London, 1808, p.139.
6. See John Hayes, 'The Gainsborough Drawings from Barton Grange', *The Connoisseur*, vol.CLXII, 1966, pp.86–91.

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH 1727–1788

WOODED LANDSCAPE WITH SHEPHERD AND SHEEP

Pen and ink, black and grey washes and white chalk
11 × 14¼ inches · 279 × 362 mm
Drawn *c.*1780

COLLECTIONS

John Jeffreys Pratt, 1st Marquess Camden (1759–1840);
Percy Moore Turner (1877–1952);
The Fine Art Society;
Private collection, purchased from the above in 1944;
By inheritance to 2025

LITERATURE

Philip Sassoon, *Gainsborough: Loan Exhibition in aid of the Royal Northern Hospital*, exh. cat. London (45 Park Lane), 1936, cat. no.37;
Mary Woodall, *Gainsborough's Landscape Drawings*, London, 1939, cat. no.327, p.69;
John Hayes, *Drawings of Thomas Gainsborough*, New Haven and London, 1971, vol.I, cat no., 497;
Andrew Wilton and Anne Lyles, *The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750–1880*, exh. cat., London and Washington (Royal Academy and National Gallery of Art), 1993, cat. 133, illustrated.

EXHIBITED

Oxford, Oxford Arts Club, *Drawings by Thomas Gainsborough*, June-July 1935, no.23;
London, 45 Park Lane, *Gainsborough: Loan Exhibition in aid of the Royal Northern Hospital*, February – March 1936, no.37;
London, Fine Art Society, October 1944, no.37;
London and Washington, *The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750–1880*, 1993, cat. no.133

This fluid, late landscape drawing was made by Thomas Gainsborough towards the end of his career. Gainsborough had spent a lifetime refining his mark making, culminating in a suite of graphically bold, almost abstract images. In this unusually grand and beautifully preserved example, Gainsborough captures a complex composition of trees, bank and distant hills, seated shepherd and sheep with singular economy. What makes this sheet particularly remarkable is its early history, first recorded in the collection of John Jeffreys Pratt, 1st Marquess Camden, it is clear Gainsborough did not consider the composition unfinished or insufficiently resolved.

This fluid wash study is a quintessential landscape drawing made by Thomas Gainsborough at the height of his creative powers. Writing in his *Anecdotes of Painters* published in 1808, Edward Edwards made an important early assessment of Gainsborough's late landscape drawings:

'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.'[1]

The present sheet perfectly encapsulates these qualities: Gainsborough has simply used grey wash, white and black chalk to create a composition of 'stony bank', 'a few trees' and a 'distant hills' populated by a flock of sheep and a solitary shepherd. The sheet is part of a body of drawings Gainsborough made, which were highly prized by contemporary collectors, presumably precisely because they evoked an emotional response, characterised by Edwards as 'a certain degree of solemnity.'

The technique used by Gainsborough in drawings like this was also described by Edwards:

'A process rather capricious, truly deserving the epithet bestowed upon them by a witty lady, who called them moppings. Many of these were in black and white, which colours were applied in the following manner: a small bit of sponge tied to a bit of stick, served as a pencil for the shadows, and a small lump of whiting, held by a pair of tea-tongs was the instrument by which the high lights were applied; beside these there were others in black and white chalks, India ink … with these various materials he struck out a vast number of bold, free sketches of landscape and cattle, all of which have a most captivating effect to the eye of an artist, or connoisseur of real taste.'[2]

In the present sheet, Gainsborough seems to have used a combination of methods to achieve the densely worked effect, probably 'mopping-in' certain areas, such as the dense clump of trees on the right, adding highlights to the sheep, trees and seated shepherd.

Gainsborough's landscapes were never purely topographical and the present sheet demonstrates his interest in deploying a limited vocabulary of visual motifs: sheep, shepherd, trees and hills. Many of Gainsborough's surviving drawings from this period all feature a similar group of components, rearranged to form new compositions. To achieve these 'free sketches' Gainsborough developed a visual short-hand, particularly in his handling of

trees, figures and livestock; the latter often appearing in an almost abstract reduction of shapes and lines.

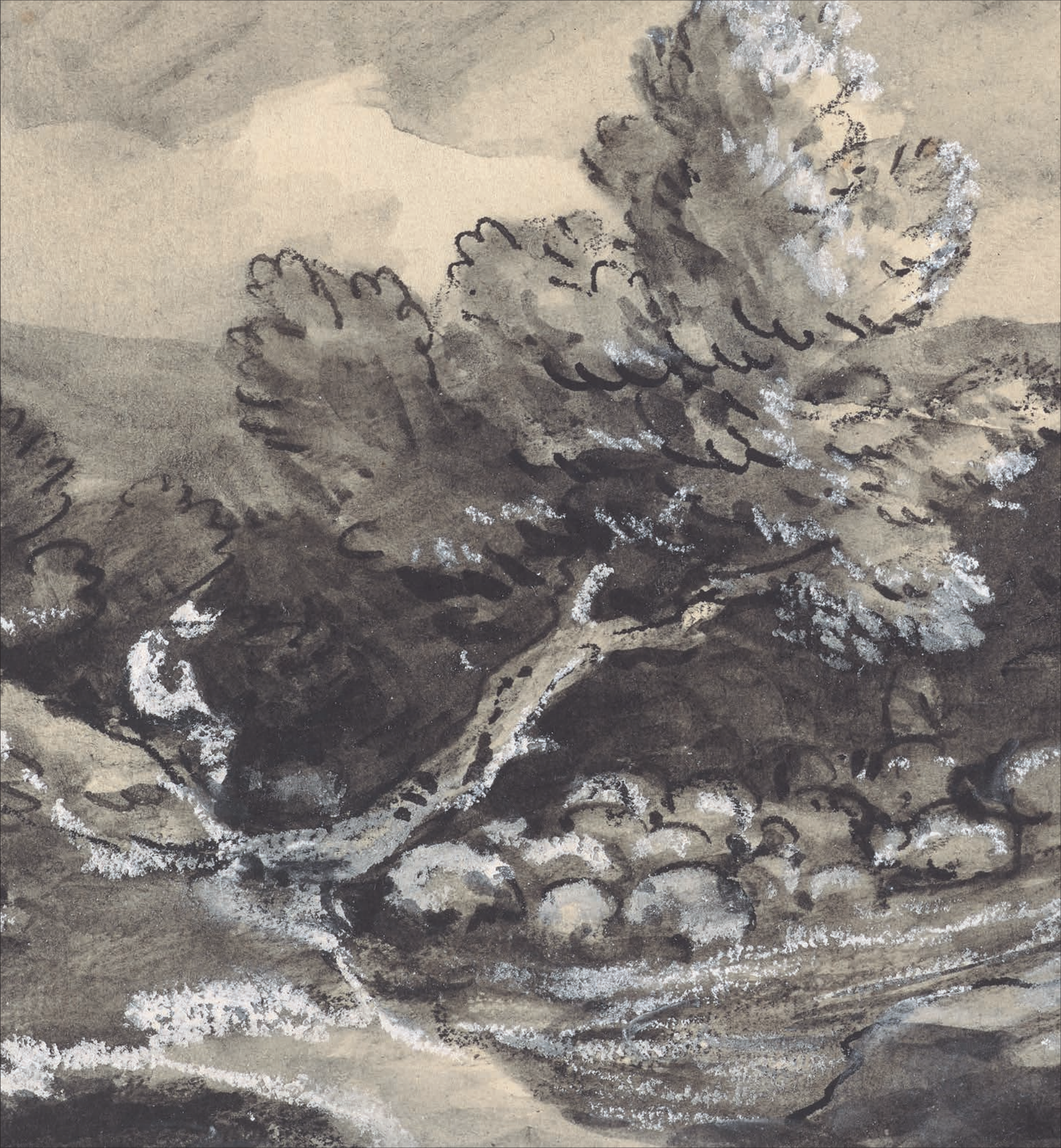
This sheet is typical of Gainsborough's landscape drawings and raises the question of its appeal to contemporaries. The idealised composition is partly inspired by the work of Gaspard Dughet, whose landscapes would have been familiar to Gainsborough and his contemporaries both in the original and through the medium of engraving. This sensibility was shared by Alexander Cozens and there is growing evidence that Gainsborough, like Cozens, was conscious of the ability for his landscape drawings to suggest certain emotions. Such drawings may also reflect Gainsborough's practice of constructing models of artificial landscapes. W. H. Pyne wrote that he had 'more than once sat by him of an evening, and seen him make models, or rather thoughts, for landscapes scenery … He would place cork or coal for his foregrounds, make middle grounds of sand and clay, bushes of mosses and lichens, and set up distant woods of broccoli.'[3] It was the apparent simplicity of his formula, as described by Pyne, which prompted Joshua Reynolds to offer the audience of his fourteenth *Discourse* a word of caution about Gainsborough's technique, noting: 'Like every other technical practice, it seems to me wholly to depend on the general talent of him who uses it … it shows the solicitude and extreme activity which he [Gainsborough] had about everything related to his art; that he wished to have his objects embodied as it were, and distinctly before him.'[4] But there is considerable evidence that contemporaries read something more immediate and emotional in Gainsborough's drawings. It was the imperceptible feeling of 'bold effect, great breadth of form' and 'solemnity' described by Edwards which probably explained the emotional appeal of such drawings to Gainsborough's contemporaries.

Thomas Gainsborough *Wooded Landscape*
Grey and grey-black washes and black and white chalk on pink washed laid paper
11 × 14½ inches · 281 × 369 mm
Drawn *c.*1780
Private collection, formerly with Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd

The present sheet, one of the grandest and best preserved of Gainsborough's late landscape drawings, unusually has an eighteenth-century provenance, being first recorded in the collection of Gainsborough's patron John Jeffreys Pratt, later 1st Marquess Camden. We have no evidence that Gainsborough sold his landscape drawings, they were probably given to a limited number of sympathetic collectors. That they were shared, discussed and admired in the eighteenth century is evinced by the limited but perceptive commentary that survives by his contemporaries. This richly worked sheet stands as one of the most expansive and boldest late drawings by Gainsborough to have survived.

NOTES

1. Edward Edwards, *Anecdotes of Painting*, London, 1808, p.139.
2. Edward Edwards, *Anecdotes of Painting*, London, 1808, p.139.
3. Ephraim Hardcastle (W. H. Pyne), *Wine and Walnuts*, London, 1824, II, p.197.
4. Ed. Robert Wark, *Joshua Reynolds Discourses on Art*, New Haven and London, 1975, p.250.



MATHER BROWN 1761–1831

JOHN REEVES

Oil on unlined canvas
30¼ × 24⅞ inches · 770 × 630 mm
Signed lower right: 'M. Brown pt.'
Inscribed on the back of the canvas: 'Painted Anno 1790'

COLLECTIONS

John Reeves (1752–1829);
John Reeves (1774–1856), cousin of the above;
John Russell Reeves (1804–1877), son of the above;
Thomas James Reeves (1847–1909), son of the above;
Mary Alice Reeves (1871–1961), daughter of the above;
Christopher Noel Goodman (1904–2002), son of the above;
By inheritance until 2025;
Düsseldorfer Auktionshaus, 25th May 2025, lot. 1213;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

LITERATURE

Dorinda Evans, *Mather Brown Early American Artist in England*, Middletown, 1982, p.90, illustrated, cat. no.148, p.223.

This commanding portrait was made by the Boston-born artist Mather Brown in 1790. Painted in London, the portrait depicts the lawyer and legal scholar John Reeves whilst he was negotiating a commercial treaty with representatives from the new United States and shortly before his appointment as chief judge, later first Chief Justice of Newfoundland. Brown came from a long-established Massachusetts family he was named for his maternal ancestor the Reverend Increase Mather who had served as the sixth President of Harvard College. Trained initially in Boston, he spent time in London in the studio of Benjamin West before establishing himself as a successful painter in London. Brown was supported by a stream of commissions from visiting Americans, painting in 1786 the earliest portrait of Thomas Jefferson who had recently arrived in Paris to take up his post as the American Ambassador to France. Jefferson in turn, commissioned Brown to paint a portrait of John Adams, then serving as the American Ambassador to Britain. In 1787 Reeves had been appointed legal counsel to the Board of Trade and was serving as a law clerk for the Board's American Department directly advising on the commercial treaty John Adams was attempting to secure on behalf of the new nation.

Mather Brown is the least well known and least celebrated of the pioneering generation of American painters who followed Benjamin West and John Singleton Copley. Brown was born in Boston to a well-connected Massachusetts family, his grandfather, Mather Byles was a leading Congregational minister in the city. Following the death of his mother Elizabeth, Brown's father Gawan, married the widow of Joseph Adams, the brother of Samuel Adams, founder of the Sons of Liberty and signatory of the Declaration of Independence. Brown knew Copley as a child – Copley had painted both Brown's mother and grandfather – but it was Gilbert Stuart who Brown would claim 'was the first person … who learnt me to draw at about 12 Years of age at Boston.' As Dorinda Evans has pointed out, Stuart made a short visit to Boston in 1774 expecting to profit from Copley's recent departure for London. Brown can, therefore, have only received very informal instruction from Stuart. Brown followed the American army to Philadelphia, hoping to make money as a miniaturist, returning to Boston in 1778 where he met John Trumbull who had recently taken the lease on the studio of John Smibert, filled with Smibert's pioneering contents of copies after European old masters, engravings and plaster casts. Trumbull himself gave a summation of the artistic situation in Boston: 'Mr Copley was gone to Europe, and there remained in Boston no artist from whom I could gain oral instruction; but these copies supplied the place, and I made some progress.'[1] In this way, Brown and Trumbull gained a rudimentary training.

All this took place against a backdrop of the Revolutionary War and Brown found himself pulled between the competing parties in Boston, his Tory grandfather was a loyalist, whilst his father's marriage placed him at the heart of the Revolution and his older half-brothers all fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill on the American side. Probably as a consequence of the war, Brown decided to try his luck in Europe. He arrived in Paris in 1781, where he was entertained by the American Ambassador, Benjamin Franklin


M. Brown

Gilbert Stuart *John Singleton Copley*

Oil on canvas · 26½ × 22¼ inches · 673 × 565 mm
Painted *c.*1784
NPG 2143

who presented him at Versailles as the 'Grand Son to one of his most particular friends in America.' Franklin, in turn, furnished Brown with a passport to Britain and letter of introduction to 'the famous Mr West.'

Benjamin West ran a hugely productive and successful studio in London, which became a mecca for young American painters. Brown clearly spent some time with West, exhibiting his first painting at the Royal Academy in 1782, giving West's studio in Newman Street as his address. Brown rapidly established a successful portrait practice attracting members of the expatriate American community and British aristocratic and society figures. In the Spring of 1786 Thomas Jefferson, the newly appointed American Ambassador to France, arrived in London to discuss details of the treaty he and John Adams were empowered to negotiate with Britain. Jefferson sat to Brown for his portrait, his account book recording that Brown was paid £10 on April 25th, 1786, the day before his departure for France. Adams was so pleased with the likeness, he requested a copy. Jefferson's portrait is now lost, but the replica Brown made for Adams survives and is preserved in the National Portrait Gallery, Washington. Later in 1786 Thomas Jefferson wrote from Paris to Colonel William Stephens Smith, who had recently married the young Abigail Adams, asking him to arrange for Brown to paint John Adams from life. Jefferson explained 'I wish to add it to those of other principal American characters which I have or shall have: and I had rather it should be original than a copy.' Jefferson already had a portrait of George Washington by the American artist Joseph Wright and two busts, one of John Paul Jones and another possibly of Benjamin Franklin, by Jean-Antoine Houdon. The following year Jefferson commissioned Brown to complete a portrait of Thomas Paine, the famous promoter of American independence. Jefferson was still waiting for his portrait of Adams in 1787 writing again to Smith to urge Adams to sit: 'as I should be much mortified should I not get it done before [Adams] leaves Europe.' Finished in 1788, Brown's portrait of Adams is now in the collection of the Boston Athenaeum. Jefferson repeatedly expressed his preference for Brown as a portraitist to the exclusion of other American artists, including his friend and correspondent John Trumbull.

Brown's portrait of John Reeves is similar in approach, palette and handling to his portrait of Jefferson. Brown shows the British lawyer seated in a severe black coat, with white stock and his own powdered hair. Reeves was a barrister and legal academic, born in London, he was educated at Eton and Merton College, Oxford. Called to the bar in 1779, Reeves was appointed a commissioner in bankruptcy. Reeves was most famous for his legal scholarship publishing his important *History of English Law* in 1783–4. Reeves rejected an institutional categorisation of English law in favour of a historical approach. It was a hugely influential text across the Atlantic world, both Jefferson and David Hoffman recommended it, including it on the reading lists of American law students during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.[2] John Reeves was legal counsel to the Board of Trade serving as a law clerk for the Board's American Department during their negotiations with Adams. It is likely he

would have been aware of Brown's portraits of Jefferson and Adams.

Reeves spent much of his career involved with North America. In 1791, a year after this portrait was completed, he was appointed chief judge of the Newfoundland court. The following year he was made chief justice of Newfoundland publishing his *History of the Government of the Island of Newfoundland* in 1793. In 1803 Reeves became Superintendent of the Alien Office, a department of the Home Office founded to control the influx of French refugees into Britian. In 1814 Reeves explored the question of whether Americans born before the War of Independence retained their English citizenship, Reeves concluded that they did noting: 'Mr Jefferson might have the benefit of his American citizenship in perfect compatibility with the claims upon him from British allegiance.'[3]

Brown's portrait shows Reeves at the outset of his career. Painted with remarkably fluency, Brown shows his indebtedness to the works of Gilbert Stuart in the plasticity and volume he manages to impart to his sitter. Throughout, Brown uses a virtuosic range of paint effects, with passages of highlight achieved using sweeping impasto, whilst Reeves's hair is suggested with a mass of dry, broken brushstrokes. The paint surface remains in exceptional condition and the canvas unlined. This state of preservation reflects the painting's history, having been preserved in the family of the sitter until 2025.

Mather Brown *Thomas Jefferson*

Oil on canvas · 35¾ × 28½ inches · 908 × 724 mm
Painted 1786
National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; bequest of Charles Francis Adams
NPG.99.66

Mather Brown *John Adams*

Oil on canvas · 35½ × 28⅛ inches · 902 × 713 mm
Painted 1788
Boston Athenaeum

NOTES

1. Dorinda Evans, *Mather Brown: Early American Artist in England*, Middletown, 1982, p.12.
2. Morris L. Cohen, 'Thomas Jefferson Recommends a Course of Law Study', *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, number 119, 1971, p.832; and David Hoffman, *A Course of Legal Study Addressed to Students and the Profession Generally*, Baltimore, 1836, vol.1, p.162.
3. John Reeves, *Two Tracts Shewing, That Americans, Born Before the Independence, are by the law of England not aliens*, London, 1816, p.16.

ROBERT DIGHTON 1751–1814

INTELLIGENCE ON THE PEACE 1783

Pen and black ink and watercolour, heightened with touches of bodycolour, on laid paper
13 1/16 x 9 3/4 inches · 332 x 247 mm
Signed lower right: 'Dighton del'
Inscribed lower left and lower centre: '495 Intelligence on the Peace'
Drawn 1783

COLLECTIONS

Carington Bowles (1724–1793);
by family descent until sold, London, Sotheby's, 30 April 1953, lot 464 (as an album), bt. Sabin, £720;
The Sabin Galleries, London;
Jeffrey Rose, bought 1 May 1953, £900;
Rose sale, Sotheby's, London, 23 February 1978, lot 12;
Abbott & Holder, London;
Michael Winner (1934–2012);
Winner sale, Bonham's, London, 16 December 2024, lot.76;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

ENGRAVED

Mezzotint for Carington Bowles published in 1783

This humorous drawing was made by Robert Dighton for the publisher Carington Bowles, it shows a group of London working men reading the report of the Proclamation of Peace between Britain and America at the end of the American Revolutionary War. Dighton's print was published with the title 'Intelligence on the Peace' and his satire explores the familiar trope of tradesmen neglecting their work to discuss the politics of the day. The London Gazette containing the announcement that peace had been signed was that of September 6–9 1783. Peace was formally proclaimed in London on 6 October, after which the proclamation was 'stuck up in divers parts.' Dighton

shows a cobbler, identifiable from his trade sign as Tristram Awl, reading the gazette to a small crowd consisting of a lamplighter, baker, cutler, sweep and barber. Dighton makes these recognisable types, red faced and faintly grotesque; the title of the print giving a clue to the satire at work. It is clear that the debate over the future relationship between North America and Britain is far from 'intelligent' and that it is the subject of derision from the illiterate men. This was a trope Dighton explored in other cartoons of the period and was clearly a satire which Bowles found popular with his largely urban, middle-class clientele.

Robert Dighton was born in London and trained at the Royal Academy Schools, he worked as a draughtsman for some of the leading print-publishers of the period. Dighton produced illustrations for John Bell's edition of Shakespeare and for Thomas Lowndes's *New English Theatre*. In 1779 a series of portraits of actors and actresses in mezzotint were published by William Richardson and a *Book of Heads*, with a self-portrait as a title-plate, was engraved by the mapmaker and printseller Carington Bowles. Dighton's career as a designer of droll mezzotints and engravings dates to 1780, following the death of John Collett. Dighton's prints were immensely popular, engraved by Bowles and sold from his 'Map & Print Warehouse' situated in St Paul's Churchyard. Dighton's cartoons were frequently topical, satirising contemporary politics, celebrities and events.

In the present design, Dighton has included a wealth of details which contemporary Londoners would instantly have recognised. The scene is set close to Bowles's own shop, with the spire of St Nicholas Cole Abbey visible in the background. A series of handbills are legible on the wall above the cobbler's stall, these include one advertising the Prussian conjurer, scientific lecturer and quack, Gustavus Katterfelto. A figure of satire himself, Katterfelto had reached public acclaim during an influenza epidemic in 1782, but announced his departure from London in 1783 and sale of his extensive equipment. Hannah Humphrey had capitalised on his advertised departure, publishing a satirical portrait of Katterfelto, his family in toe, returning to Germany. A second handbill advertises Charles Hughes's 'Equestrian Philharmonic Academy' at the Royal Circus on Blackfriars Road which had opened the previous year in 1782.

Dighton shows a cast of identifiable characters. The announcement of the peace agreed in Paris is being read by the cobbler, Awl, whose sign proclaims that he is a: 'Boot & Showe maker, likevice corns cut in the neteest manner at home & abrode.' The inference is that Awl is barely literate and his listeners unlikely to be more so, they debate the news of relations between Britain and the new United States and neglect their trades. The lamplighter's assistant allows oil to pour from his lamp, whilst the cuttler, baker, sweep and barber all stand idly. Dighton had designed a similar scene set within a poor barber's shop entitled 'Intelligence on the Change of Ministry'. Dighton is satirising the voracious news consumption of London's working class; this was a phenomenon much commented upon throughout the century. Arthur Murphy's 1758 play *The Upholsterer, or What News?* Revolves around an upholsterer whose business suffers from his obsession with newspapers, an obsession which results in his bankruptcy, an event that in turn appears in print. At which point he observes: 'I shall be read of, in the same paper, in the *London Gazette*, by the powers abroad; together with the Pope, and the French king and the Mogul, and all of 'em – good, good, very good!'

Dighton's drawing can now be read as prophetic. It was precisely the rise in news consumption by a constituent previously excluded from world affairs that precipitated increases in both working class literacy and political awareness, both factors in changing political attitudes. Made in the decade that not only the United States began to flourish as an independent nation, but the start of the French Revolution, Dighton's satire takes on an added resonance.

Carington Bowles after Robert Dighton
Intelligence on the Peace
Mezzotint · 13½ × 9¾ inches · 343 × 249 mm
Engraved *c.*1783
© The Trustees of the British Museum

ATHENA RESTRAINING A HERO

Pencil, ink, and wash on laid paper
13¾ × 17⅜ inches · 350 × 440 mm
Drawn *c.*1790

COLLECTIONS

Christopher Powney, 1976;
Private collection, Canada, purchased from the above;
Waddington's, Toronto, 12 December 2024, lot 41;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

EXHIBITED

London, Heim Gallery, *John Flaxman*, 1976, cat. no.75.

This grand wash drawing was made by John Flaxman in Rome whilst he was working on the designs for his important series of illustrations to the works of Homer. The dynamic scene shows a Greek hero being restrained by Athena, drawn with characteristic fluency and economy by Flaxman. Whilst in Italy Flaxman began to prepare a series of important illustrated books and this design may well relate to Flaxman's work on his commission for designs of the *Iliad* in 1792. Flaxman's outline drawings were recognised immediately as revolutionary for their purity of outline and narrative clarity; as David Bindman has observed: 'their influence on nineteenth-century artists is incalculable' and copies by artists as diverse as Jacques-Louis David and Philipp Otto Runge survive.[1]

Flaxman was the son of a professional sculptor, and he received his earliest education in his father's Covent Garden shop and studio. Flaxman's early prodigious talents as a draughtsman attracted the attention of two of his father's professional contacts, George Romney and Josiah Wedgwood, both of whom became important supporters. Flaxman set out for the Continent with a series of commissions, including from Josiah Wedgwood, who relied on Flaxman to supply designs for his Etruria works. One of Flaxman's tasks was to supervise the work of John Devaere, who was being sponsored by Wedgwood to work as a modeller in Rome. In Rome Flaxman devoted himself to studying the vast store of antiquities available in the city, this included both the great sculpture available at the Capitoline and new Museo Pio Clementino in the Vatican as well as a variety of princely collections. Flaxman's surviving sketchbooks show that he was particularly attracted to the shallow bas-reliefs found on sarcophagi noting in 1793: 'the ancient sarcophagi [which] present a magnificent collection of compositions from the great poets of antiquity.' It was the taut, concentrated action of Roman sarcophagi carved in bas-relief and comprised of friezes of figures which had a transformative effect on Flaxman as a designer.

John Flaxman *Admetus rescuing Alcestis from the grave*
Pen and grey ink and wash
18¾ × 25 inches · 477 × 638 mm

John Flaxman *The madness of Ajax urged on by Athene*
Pen and ink and grey wash
5½ × 6 inches · 140 × 151 mm
© The Trustees of the British Museum

The present large-format sheet was made by Flaxman in Rome. Flaxman shows one of his favourite dramatic moments, a Greek hero, arm raised about to deliver a fatal blow, being restrained by Athena. The figure of the hero is indebted to one of the *Dioscuri*, a figure-type which appears in many Roman sarcophagi and a figure Flaxman drew on multiple occasions. The lines of the musculature are precisely copied from an opening showing the left-hand *Horse Tamer* in one of Flaxman's Roman sketchbooks now in the Yale Center for British Art.[2] The same figure appears in another large-scale, ink and wash drawing Flaxman made of *Hercules Rescuing Alcestis* now in the British Museum. The idea of Athena intervening with a hero at a moment of frenzy was one that evidently appealed to Flaxman. He designed a scene from *Ajax* by Sophocles showing Athena filling Ajax with false visions and included in his illustrations to the *Iliad* a depiction of Athena repressing the fury of Achilles, both compositionally similar to the current design. In the present drawing Athena is shown restraining the male figure, who is shown sword raised, recently having slain a man, whose body is at his feet.

Flaxman was fascinated in the moments of homicidal fury that gripped heroes in Greek literature. The present composition was adapted by Flaxman for one of his illustrations to the Iliad *Athena repressing the fury of Achilles* which shows the moment Achillies draws his sword on Agamemnon and is stopped by Athena pulling his hair. Flaxman's greatest sculptural commission, a monumental group completed for Frederick Hervey, Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry, was a depiction of *The Fury of Athamas*. The violence of Flaxman's design – showing the maddened king of Thebes killing his son – had enormous impact, directly inspiring Antonio Canova's *Hercules and Lychas* now in the Galleriea Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome. Whilst the present design was not engraved, the sinuous line, economy of form and legible action are all features of Flaxman's published line engravings. Flaxman's own view of his line drawings was that they were not ends in themselves, but were compositions upon which sculpture could be based; he wrote to William Hayley on 26 October 1793: 'my view does not terminate in giving a few outlines to the world: my intention is to shew how any story may be represented in a series of compositions on principles of the Antients, of which as soon as I return to England I intend to give specimens in Sculpture of different kinds, in groups of basrelieves, suited to all the purposes of Sacred and Civil Architecture.' The clarity, the simplicity and the reduction of naturalistic space which Flaxman's contemporaries so much admired were, then, partly a consequence of his attempt to see the designs in terms of marble cutting and low relief.

NOTES

1. David Bindman, 'Thomas Hope's Modern Sculptures: 'a zealous and liberal patronage of its contemporary professors', in Ed. David Watkin and Philip Hewat-Jaboor, *Thomas Hope: Regency Designer*, exh. cat. London (Victoria & Albert Museum), 2008, p.134.
2. Eckart Marchand, 'Flaxman: The Yale Sketchbook', *The Walpole Society*, 2010, vol.72, p.144.

THE WAVE

Oil on canvas
33 × 48½ inches · 840 × 1235 mm
Painted *c.*1793

COLLECTIONS

George Romney;
By descent to Elizabeth Romney (1832–1893), the artist's granddaughter;
Romney sale, Christie's, 25 May 1894, lot. 202;
Bought Shepherd, (probably Shepherd Brothers, 27 King St, St James's);
J. L. E. Brandreth;
John George Butcher M.P., son-in-law of the above, by 1900;
R. S Verelst;
Christie's, 28 June 1963, lot.76;
Sabin Galleries Ltd, by 1984;
Peter Koblenzer (1922–2019), purchased from the above;
Koblenzer sale, Christie's, 8th June 2006, lot.63;
Private collection, UK to 2024;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

LITERATURE

Lionel Cust, 'The Romney Exhibition at the Grafton Gallery', *Magazine of Art*, August 1900, pp.449–50;
T.H. Ward and William Roberts, *Romney: A Biographical and Critical Essay with a Catalogue Raisonné of his Works*, London and New York, 1904, vol.2, p.202;
David Cross, *A Striking Likeness: The Life of George Romney*, Aldershot, 2000, pp.120, 185;
David Cross, 'The Admiral of the Blues': George Romney, Depression and Creativity', in ed. Alex Kidson, *Those Delightful Regions of the Imagination: Essays on George Romney*, New Haven and London, 2002 p.29, repr. on dust-wrapper;
Alex Kidson, *George Romney 1734–1802*, exh. cat. Liverpool, London and San Marino (Walker Art Gallery, National Portrait Gallery and Huntington), 2002, pp.35, 193;
Yvonne Romney Dixon and Alex Kidson, 'Romney Sketchbooks in Public Collections', *Transactions of the Romney Society*, vol.8, 2003, pp.23, 33;
Alex Kidson, *George Romney: A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings*, New Haven and London, 2015, vol. III, cat. no.1755

EXHIBITED

London, Grafton Galleries, *Exhibition of a special selection from the works by George Romney: including a few portraits of Emma, Lady Hamilton, by other artists.*, 1900, no.114 (lent by J.G. Butcher M.P.)

George Romney *The Wave*
Black ink and grey wash over pencil
13¼ × 19 inches · 337 × 483 mm
Drawn late 1780s
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.5466

'There is a serious case to be made, at least from the perspective of the twenty-first century, that Romney's true originality lay in the creation of extraordinary images such as this.'[1]

This extraordinary painting is a rare manifestation of George Romney's preoccupation with man's fragility in the face of nature's power. Painted towards the end of his career, the composition shows four young boys dancing on the seashore, apparently unaware that they are about to be enveloped by the dark wave on the left; rolling dark clouds and a lingering fiery red sunset contribute to a sense of portentous menace. As one of the most iconographically singular works from Romney's career this painting has been much discussed, and its precise meaning debated. David Cross has suggested that 'the motif of the shipwreck underpins Romney's life and art' offering a visual manifestation of the depression which afflicted him, particularly in the last decade of his life. The scale and ambition of the present canvas and the fact that a fully worked-up drawing for the composition survives in the collection of the Yale Center for British Art raises certain questions over its intended audience and ultimately its significance within Romney's oeuvre.

George Romney was born in modest circumstances in Cumbria, after training with a local painter he moved to London and worked in the circle of the St Martin's Lane Academy. Following several years acquiring Continental polish in Italy Romney took the expensive lease on a large house on the south side of Cavendish Square which had formerly been occupied by Francis Cotes. Supported by a series of

influential patrons, Romney established a successful and profitable portrait practice. Romney combined his prodigious portrait practice with a relentless campaign of drawing, making hundreds of studies for historical compositions, many of which never came to fruition.

By the late 1780s Romney was routinely complaining of being fettered to portraiture and projecting his retirement with a view to concentrating on subject painting. In a letter to his friend, supporter and eventual biographer William Hayley, Romney protests: 'This cursed portrait-painting! How I am shackled with it! I am determined to live frugally, that I may enable myself to cut it short, as soon as I am tolerably independent, and then give my mind up to those delightful regions of imagination.'[2] Romney's sense of disenchantment fed into his mental state. Romney suffered spells of depression all his life, Hayley was particularly sensitive to Romney's fragile mental health making many references to his 'perilously acute feelings' and specifically his dark moods, described him as being 'as wild as the Wind of the Equinox.'

The present, remarkable painting belongs to an exceptional group of subject paintings Romney made in the last decade of his life. These include *The Tempest: Shipwreck Scene, Act I* painted for Boydell's *Shakespeare Gallery* and subsequently destroyed, *Boys in a Boat Drifting out to Sea* in a private collection and *Shipwreck at the Cape of Good Hope* which was engraved by William Blake for Hayley's *The Life of George Romney*. In each Romney explores the fragility of his human subjects in the face of the power of the sea. The last of these, based on an episode reported by the Swedish naturalist C.P. Thunberg, shows a contemporary wreck, foreshadowing the more famous paintings of maritime disasters in the early nineteenth century.

In the visionary conception of history painting that germinated in his mind throughout the decade, Romney contrasted the 'artificial and cold macanical effect' of academic historical compositions of the day, created in piecemeal fashion, with his own notion of a painting:

'heated and fermented long in the mind and varied every possible way to make the whole perfect that the whole composition may come from the mind like one sudden impression or conception.'[3]

As Alex Kidson has observed the 'other-worldly atmosphere' in the present work does 'indeed bear every sign of having been 'heated and fermented long' in a mind not unduly exercised by the expectations of his contemporaries.' As with *Boys in a Boat Drifting out to Sea* there is no obvious literary source, and it may be that Romney took his idea from a human-interest story in a newspaper. Tsunamis were not unknown in the eighteenth century, in 1783 a series of large earthquakes in Calabria triggered a rockslide near Scilla causing a tsunami which killed 1,500 seeking refuge on a nearby beach. Sir William Hamilton provided an account of the earthquake – and fatal wave – from Count Francesco Ippolito to the Royal Society which was published in their *Philosophical Transactions* in 1783.

The painting itself is an unsettling meditation on mortality. The children – painted in the spirited, impish style of Titania's attendants from Romney's suite of paintings showing scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – are apparently carefree and completely unaware of their impending

William Blake, after Romney *The Shipwreck*, a preparatory drawing for the engraving for William Hayley's 'Life of Romney'

Brush drawing in grey wash, pencil and squared for transfer 5¼ × 7⅛ inches · 135 × 179 mm · Drawn in 1804

George Romney *Titania and her Attendants*

Oil on canvas · 47 × 59 inches · 1194 × 1499 mm
Painted *c.*1790
Private collection
Formerly with Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

doom. In the preparatory drawing at Yale, two of the children seem to have an awareness of the danger at hand, in the finished painting Romney reverts the figures to a state of innocence. Romney was clearly interested in eliciting a frisson from his viewer, showing us the dark wall of water a moment before impact. Romney creates an image that reaches beyond the terms of the sublime as articulated by Burke to something even more dreadful, the violent loss of innocents.

As Alex Kidson noted in 2002 'there is a serious case to be made, at least from the perspective of the twenty-first century, that Romney's true originality lay in the creation of extraordinary images such as this.' Romney saw an inherent fragility in human existence and in spare, abstracted images such as this he captured something of the temporary reality of the Anthropocene in the face of nature.

NOTES

1. Alex Kidson, *George Romney 1734–1802*, exh. cat. Liverpool, London and San Marino (Walker Art Gallery, National Portrait Gallery and Huntington), 2002, p.192.
2. Yvonne Romney Dixon, *Designs from Fancy: George Romney's Shakespearean Drawings*, exh. cat. Washington (The Folger Shakespeare Library), 1998, p.21.
3. Romney's notes for a discourse on painting. See Yvonne Romney Dixon, *Designs from Fancy: George Romney's Shakespearean Drawings*, exh. cat. Washington (The Folger Shakespeare Library), 1998, pp.232–33.

JOHN LINNELL 1792–1882

THE ISLE OF WIGHT FROM LYMINGTON QUAY

Oil on panel
11¼ × 15¾ inches · 286 × 400 mm
Signed and dated bottom right: 'J Linnell 1826'

COLLECTIONS

Edward Thomas Daniell (1804–1842), commissioned from the artist 1825, (returned it to the artist in 1832);
James Fenton, Norton Hall, Gloucestershire;
Fenton sale, Christie's 28 February 1880, lot 443, bought Wertheimer;
Christie's, 7 July 1883, bought in but subsequently sold Christie's, 17 May 1884, lot 61, (£409 10s) bought Adair;
Adair sale Christie's, 22 May 1890, lot 96, bought Ellis;
Private collection, 1992;
Private collection to 2025.

LITERATURE

Alfred T Story, *The life of John Linnell*, 1892, p.264;
Katherine Crouan, *John Linnell, Truth to Nature (A Centennial Exhibition)*, 1982, p.22, reproduced in colour, pl.28;
David Linnell, *Blake, Palmer, Linnell and Co, the life of John Linnell*, 1994, pp.143–4, 359, reproduced in colour.

EXHIBITED

London, Martyn Gregory Ltd and New York, Davis and Langdale, *John Linnell, Truth to Nature*, 1983, cat no.63, reproduced in colour;
London, Lowell Libson Ltd. and The Fine Art Society, *Power & Poetry: The Art of John Linnell*, 2008, cat. no.3, reproduced in colour.

This shimmering landscape was made at a key moment in John Linnell's career, shortly after he had met and started working with the younger Samuel Palmer. It was from Palmer – and the older William Blake – that Linnell's naturalism was tempered with something more vital and visionary. Linnell increasingly saw that divine revelation could only come by scrupulous observation. In the present limpid scene, Linnell has invested a view of Lymington Quay and the distant coast of the Isle of Wight, with a numinous quality, the clear early evening light illuminating every detail. It is a landscape that is both deeply felt and beautifully realised, a work that responds to the world of Palmer and Blake, but also looks beyond Britain to broader trends of European Romanticism.

In 1818 Linnell met William Blake. Their shared approach to both art and religion resulted in a strong connection and Linnell was to play an important part in Blake's last years, commissioning the engravings for the *Book of Job* in 1823, which Linnell published in 1826, the year of the present work and the astounding series of watercolours for Dante's *Divine Comedy* in 1824. It was Linnell who was to introduce Samuel Palmer to William Blake in 1824, Palmer noted that: 'it pleased God to send Mr Linnell as a good angel from Heaven to pluck me from the pit of modern art.' Linnell, in turn, visited Palmer at Shoreham in the late 1820s, their surviving correspondence reveals a stimulating relationship, not without its tensions. Palmer increasingly rejected naturalism, seeing it as a diversion from his mission to paint his inner visions in keeping with Blake. Linnell, by contrast, was passionately interested in observing the natural world. As a student at the Royal Academy, he had spent time sketching out of doors with other young artists, particularly William Mulready, William Henry Hunt and the more established painter, John Varley.

Samuel Palmer *View of Lee, North Devon*
Oil on canvas · 10½ × 15 inches · 267 × 381 mm
Painted 1834–1835
© The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Linnell's early career was devoted to landscape. When the Society of Painters in Water Colours changed its name to the Society of Painters in Oil and Water Colours in 1813, Linnell was a founding member, and contributed fifty-two works (probably all oils) to its exhibitions between 1813 and 1820. Many of these were based on sketching trips made in 1813, 1814, and 1815. In 1813, with George Robert Lewis, he visited north Wales, where he was impressed by the wild scenery, writing many years later, 'I could almost fancy myself living in the times of Jacob and Esau and might expect to meet their flocks.' Like Palmer, Linnell increasingly viewed his landscape paintings as being more complex than merely representations of the natural world. It was friendship with Cornelius Varley, brother of John, that seems to have stimulated both a religious conversion and a heightened interest in the genre. He joined the Baptist church in January 1812, becoming a member of the chapel at Keppel Street, Bloomsbury, and bought drawing instruments which would enable him to transcribe what he saw with scientific accuracy. He read the writings of William Paley, whose natural theology encouraged Linnell to regard the study of landscape as a valuable response to the work of God.

Caspar David Friedrich *Evening on the Baltic Sea, 1831*

Oil on canvas · 21¾ × 28½ inches · 554 × 725 mm
Albertinum, Gal. No. 2197 C
© Albertinum | GNM, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Photo: Elke Estel/Hans-Peter Klut

The present beautifully preserved oil on panel landscape was commissioned by one of Linnell's most significant patrons, the wealthy amateur painter Edward Thomas Daniell. Linnell had met Daniell whilst he was still at Oxford when he asked him to help promote the sale of *Illustrations of the Book of Job* by Blake. Daniell, who would go on to be ordained, found in Linnell a sympathetic mentor. He commissioned Linnell to paint a rare portrait of JMW Turner (National Portrait Gallery, London) and encouraged him to complete his great Biblical scene *St John the Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness* offering to buy it if it failed to sell. Daniell commissioned Linnell to paint *The Isle of Wight from Lymington Quay* for a cost of 20 guineas after seeing *Itchen Ferry* (now Private Collection) in Linnell's studio. The picture was delivered in August 1826; however, Daniell returned it in 1832 because he was unhappy with its condition. Linnell had originally worked up the composition in a mixed-media of oil, watercolour and varnish and it had not worn well. Linnell was, perhaps, unsurprised at this, as he had noted in his journal, 'Pro[ceded] with Isle of Wight in watercolour experiments.' Linnell offered either to repair the work or to paint a new version but Daniell preferred to exchange it for another composition altogether. After its return Linnell worked over the entire composition in oils and subsequently resold it.

The view depicts the quay of the small Hampshire town of Lymington, looking across the Solent to the Isle of Wight, three figures in the foreground are shown hauling in a sail and moving a keg, the lengthening shadows suggesting the scene is set in early evening. In the centre of the composition is a single moored boat, silhouetted against the pearly sky, other vessels have clearly been readied for the night. Linnell diffuses the scene with a remarkable luminosity, articulating the surface with touches of pure white highlight. In the fresh and free application of paint Linnell signals himself as part of the plein air tradition of Bonington, but in its meticulous observation of every detail of basket, boat and wharf he indicates his own studious application to landscape. In mood the painting seems to echo the greatest landscapes of his European contemporaries, particularly Caspar David Friedrich, Johan Christian Dahl and Christen Købke. Furthermore, in its strong inner-light and Linnell's almost religious desire to follow an artistic creed of 'Truth to Nature', this small painting anticipates some of the pre-occupations of the Pre-Raphaelites.

HANNAH PALMER

Pencil
7 × 4½ inches · 180 × 110 mm
Inscribed lower middle 'H Palmer'
Drawn *c.*1837

COLLECTIONS
Thomas Agnew and Sons Ltd.;
George Goyder (1908–1997);
Private collection, by descent, to 2025;
Bishop & Miller, Stowmarket, 18th June 2025, lot. 106;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

This tender portrait was made by John Linnell and shows his daughter, Hannah shortly after her marriage to the artist Samuel Palmer. Hannah, known in her family as Anny, was 19 when she married Palmer in 1837 and it seems likely that this study was made at that time.

Shortly after their marriage, the Palmers set out for Italy with George Richmond and his wife Julia Tatham. In Italy Hannah worked alongside her husband producing a series of landscape drawings, Samuel describing how she made: 'really consistent, beautiful, and I think saleable drawings from nature.' This informal drawing is one of only two known likenesses of Hannah to survive.

Palmer was immensely proud of his wife's artistic attainment, writing from Italy to the Linnells in 1838 of her talent, claiming that: 'I am sure if she could sell her studies in London for anything like the time and study they have cost it would more than pay her part of the expenses but unless driven to extremity I should like to keep them as it may be impossible that they can be replaced.'[1] Hannah had travelled with two commissions from her father, to paint small-scale copies after Raphael's frescoes in the Vatican loggia and to colour a set of prints after Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. She increasingly worked alongside her husband, working out of doors together and spending her time, when the weather was poor, as she wrote to her parents: 'in grinding color and replenishing our boxes.' In April 1838, Hannah showed works in the Rome Exhibition, the following year she is recorded in a cartoon by Penry Williams seated with her husband and a clutch of other international painters working en plein air at La Serpentara in Olevano Romano. Hannah's surviving works, such as her watercolour of the *Street of Tombs, Pompeii*, now in the collection of the Chazen Museum of Art, Wisconsin, show how accomplished she had become. Compared with a watercolour of the same view by her husband now in the V&A, London, Hannah's light filled watercolour is more successful and more compositionally imaginative. On her return to London, Hannah continued to paint and exhibited a sequence of Italian landscapes at the British Institution throughout the 1840s.

Hannah Palmer *Via delle Scuole, Pompeii, 1838*
Graphite, watercolor, and gouache
185 × 267 mm · 7¼ × 10½ inches
Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Edward
Blake Blair Endowment Fund and Walter A. and Dorothy Jones
Frautschi Endowment Fund purchase, 2004.30

NOTES

1. Ed. Raymond Lister, *The Letters of Samuel Palmer*, Oxford, 1974, vol.I, p.203.

SAMUEL PALMER 1805–1880

CROSSING THE COMMON – SUNSET

Watercolour
7¼ × 16 inches · 184 × 406 mm
Painted 1848

COLLECTIONS

Charles Sumner, Bishop of Winchester (1790–1874) purchased from the Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1848;
Leger Galleries, London, 1966;
Private collection, purchased from the above;
Leger Galleries, London, 1980;
P. B. Warner, purchased from the above;
Lowell Libson Ltd. 2006;
Private collection, acquired from the above to 2025

LITERATURE

Raymond Lister, *Catalogue raisonné of the works of Samuel Palmer*, 1988, p.158, cat. no.442;

EXHIBITED

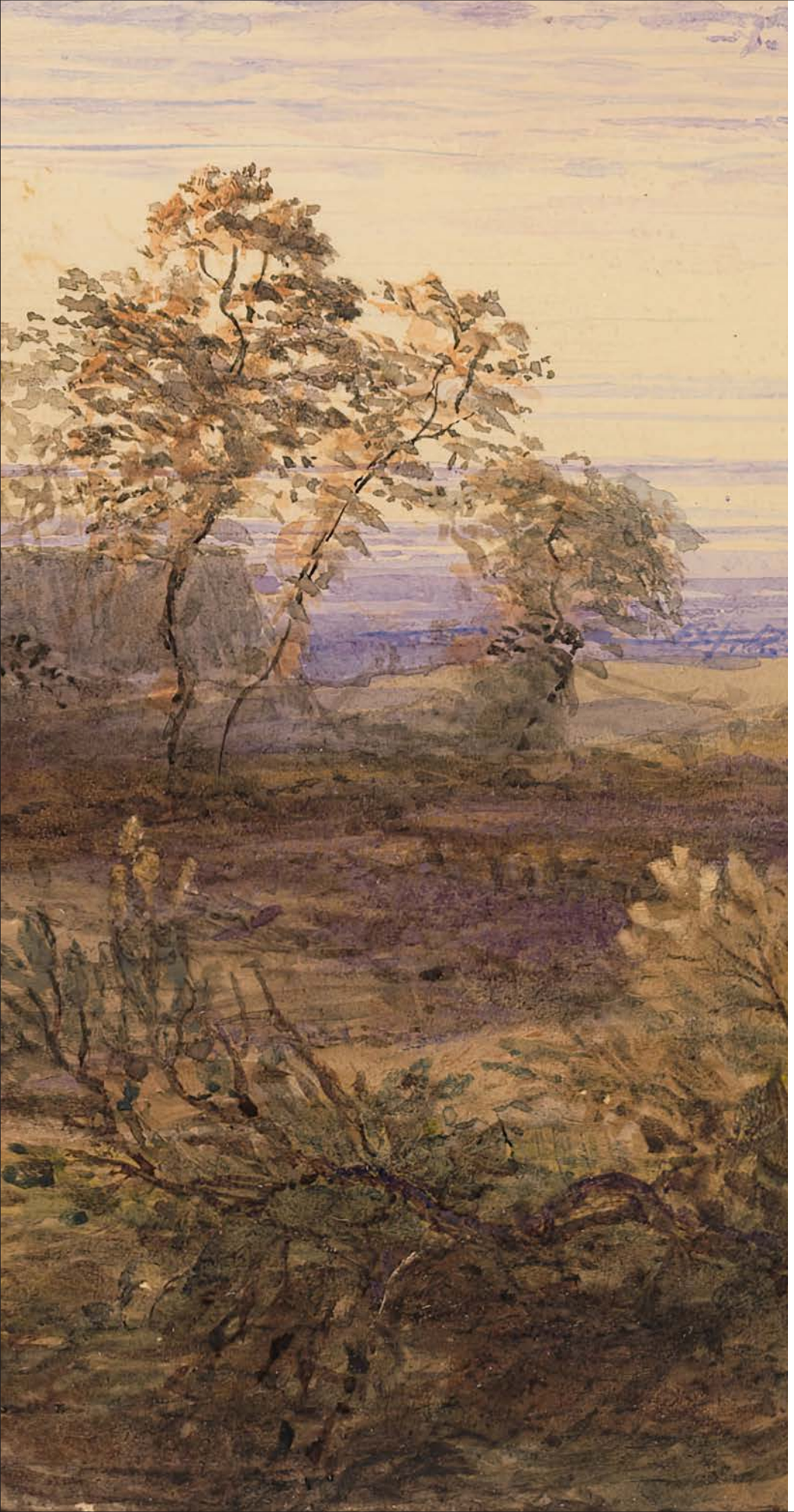
London, Society of Painters in Water Colours, 1848, no.251, 'Crossing the Common – Sunset', £10;
London, Leger Galleries, *English watercolours 1789 – 1922*, 1966, no.33;
London, Leger Galleries, *English watercolours*, 1980, no.26;
London, Leger Galleries, *Samuel Palmer,* Loan exhibition, 1992, cat. no.14

This beautifully wrought, carefully finished watercolour was exhibited by Samuel Palmer at the Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1848. Titled *Crossing the Common – Sunset*, the subject-matter presents a neat distillation of the themes that drove Palmer's work throughout his career. The panoramic format, richly worked in watercolour shows a peaceable, productive landscape at the close of day, in the foreground a wagon and herdsman return home along a limpid river, the sun is setting behind a distant stand of trees illuminating the sky with a vivid lilac sunset. Preserved in exceptional condition, this luminous watercolour is a fine example of a middle-period exhibition work, which was acquired in 1848 by the Bishop of Winchester, Charles Sumner.

Following the return to Britain from his Italian honeymoon in 1839, Palmer concentrated on establishing his reputation, both critical and commercial. He did so by producing richly worked watercolours inspired by his travels in Britain and Italy. In 1843 Palmer was elected an associate member of the Old Watercolour Society. As William Vaughan has pointed out, his election had a profound influence on the work he produced, moving him away from oil painting and the complex world of the Royal Academy. In the face of stiff competition in the exhibiting societies, Palmer developed a distinctive and easily recognizable panoramic format, known as his 'little-long', filling these intensely worked watercolours with pyrotechnic lighting effects. In this way, his exhibited watercolours differed from many of his most successful contemporaries, who delighted in the broad, washes of watercolour, Palmer by contrast produced jewel-like works. Palmer himself noted to the critic P. G. Hamerton that he became 'a water-worker only by accident', his own preference being for: 'water-colour as it appears in tempera and, on a small scale, in the old missals.' In this way, Palmer's exhibited watercolours have something of the enamelled quality of illuminated manuscripts.

Palmer received great critical admiration for his luminous exhibition watercolours.

Samuel Palmer *The Watermill*
Watercolour · 20⅛ × 28 inches · 513 × 712 mm
Painted *c.*1848–9



The Pre-Raphaelite artist, critic and collector Frederic Stephens, characterised Palmer as 'the painter of the Dorian mood', Poussin had notably used this analogy to suggest works which were 'grave, severe and full of wisdom.' As Elizabeth Barker has noted 'for Palmer's contemporaries ... his mature landscapes presented a learned (but unaffected) synthesis of the stern, the classical, the simple, the natural, harmonious and refined.'[1] The present watercolour neatly encapsulates these ideas, showing a panoramic, rural scene at the end of the day. The timeless action of the rural labourer returning home with his herd and flock as the sun sets defies immediate temporal identification: Palmer creates an image that could be ancient or modern. This sense of rural rhythm and contentment appealed to Victorian collectors and the present watercolour was acquired from the 1848 exhibition by Charles Sumner, Bishop of Winchester.

NOTES

1. William Vaughan, Elizabeth Barker and Colin Harrison, *Samuel Palmer 1805–1881: Vision and Landscape*, exh. cat., London and New York (British Museum), 2005, p.192.

JOHN FREDERICK LEWIS 1804–1876

INTERIOR OF HAGIA SOPHIA

Watercolour and pencil
12⅜ x 18⅝ inches · 315 x 465 mm
Painted 1840–41

COLLECTIONS

Hugh Lee Pattinson (1796–1858);
Julia Boyd (1846–1892);
J. Leger & Son, London (as by David Roberts);
Private collection, UK acquired from the above in 1954;
Bonhams, 26th March 2025, lot. 23;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

LITERATURE

Ed. Nicholas Tromans, *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting*, London, 2008, fig. 149, pp.170–171, illustrated.

EXHIBITED

London, Leger Galleries, *Early English Watercolours*, January – February, 1954, no.20;
London, Tate Britain, *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting*, 4 June–31 August, 2008, no catalogue number.

This exceptional watercolour was made in Istanbul in 1840 by John Frederick Lewis. Showing the interior of the great mosque of Hagia Sophia, Lewis records the complex architecture of the sixth-century church with its fifteenth-century Ottoman additions, populated by contemporary figures at prayer. Exquisitely delineated in graphite on grey paper, Lewis captures the glittering, jewel-like interior in rich watercolour, preserved in outstanding condition, this beguiling work is one of Lewis's acknowledged masterpieces.

John Frederick Lewis was part of a generation of painters who travelled East in search of new and exotic material. Trained by his father, the engraver Frederick Christian Lewis, Lewis developed friendly ties with the Landseers and like Edwin Landseer, his earliest exhibited works focused on animals. Lewis spent time working as an assistant to Thomas Lawrence and was probably responsible for adding animals to Lawrence's portraits. From 1832 Lewis toured Spain, staying with the traveller Richard Ford and his wife in Seville. Lewis exhibited numerous watercolours based on his Spanish trip at the Royal Academy and Watercolour Society, but the chief result of the tour were two albums of lithographs: *Lewis's Sketches and Drawings of the Alhambra* (1835) and *Lewis's Sketches of Spain and Spanish Character* (1836). This remarkable body of work brought into focus Lewis's professional preoccupation with the intricacies of Islamic architecture and the dress of different communities. Following the success of his Spanish work Lewis plotted a trip through eastern Europe to Egypt. In 1837 he left Britain, spending the winter in Paris before moving to Italy in early 1838. Lewis stayed in Rome until 1840 when he travelled via Albania, Corfu, Athens and Smyrna to Constantinople, modern day Istanbul.

In travelling east, Lewis was very much following in the footsteps of other British artists including David Roberts, William James Müller and David Wilkie. Lewis was particularly influenced by Wilkie as both a draughtsman and painter. On his arrival in Constantinople, in late 1840, Lewis met Wilkie who wrote home to the painter William Collins: 'we have encountered John Lewis from Greece and Smyrna. He is making a number of drawings. I said I was sure he would turn up on our route … he has been making most clever drawings as usual.'[1] The clever drawings seem to have been focused on the architecture of the great mosques. Lewis made a series of studies of the Grand Mosque at Bursa, including views of the Mausoleum of Sultan Mehmet, but most numerous are the detailed views of the interior of Hagia Sophia. Working on distinctive grey paper Lewis produced at least seven studies of the interior of the great domed mosque, evidently beguiled by the combination of early Christian basilica and delicate Ottomon decoration.

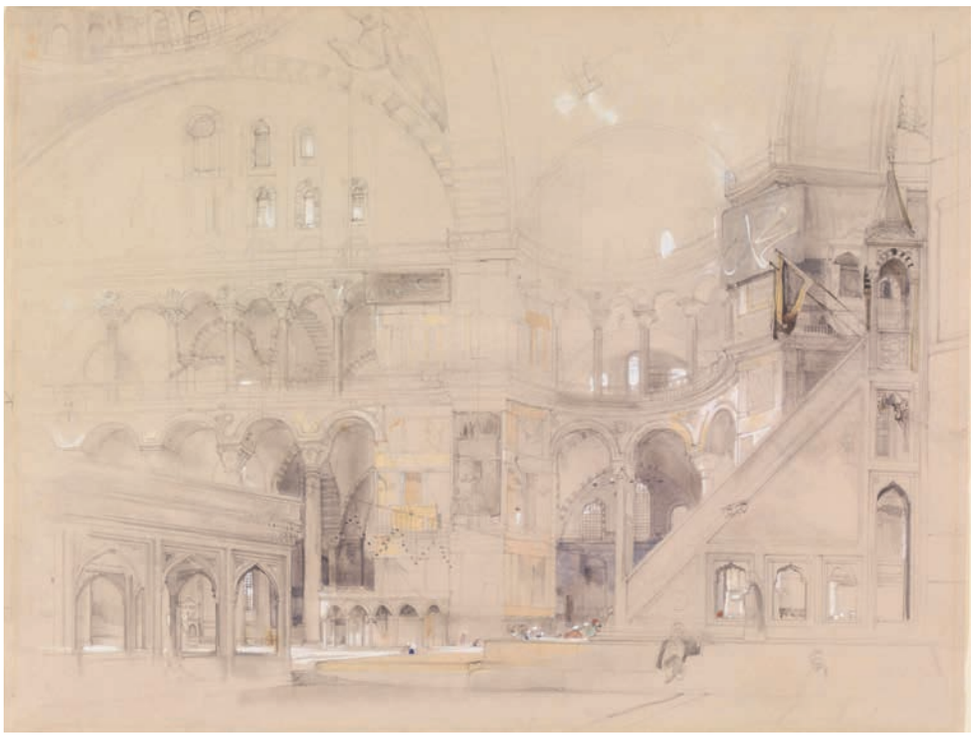
During his residence in the city, Lewis spent time amongst the British community completing a portrait of the British ambassador to the Sublime Port, John, 1st Viscount Ponsonby. Frances Vane, Marchioness of Londonderry in her chatty travelogue *Narrative of a visit to the Courts of Vienna, Constantinople, Athens, Naples &c.* published in 1844, reveals Lewis acted as her guide to Constantinople's mosques. Her description of a visit to Hagia Sophia paints a particularly evocative portrait of the British response to the great mosque:

‘On entering the mosque of St. Sophia, we found it filled with true believers engaged at their devotions, and we were advised to walk up stairs. We climbed up a dark, paved, inclined plane, reached the galleries that run round, and, leaning over, had a full view of the whole. The first thing that strikes the mind is the immense size. Mr Lewis, the painter, who accompanied us, said it was certainly larger than St Paul’s; and, from the great open space, it appeared larger than St. Peter’s at Rome … from the circumstance of its being the Ramazan [Ramadan], and twelve o’clock being the hour of prayer, we saw what Christians are seldom allowed to witness – the Mussulams at their devotions. Not a footfall was heard; the whole being covered with Turkey carpets, which Mr Lewis observed, all veered one way, the pulpit being inclined sideways to face them … the Turks were ranged in long lines, and there might be about seven hundred. Nothing could be more resplendent and picturesque than the *coup d’oeil*, and the light falling on the different coloured robes, violet, blue, scarlet, and green, all grouped together … On descending from the galleries, we walked round the mosque, the prayers were over, and the people dispersing; but one old Turk, in a pink robe and voluminous turban had ascended a seat, and was expounding the Koran.’[2]

In his depiction of the interior of Hagia Sophia Lewis does not show the moment of prayer but the scene described by Lady Londonderry of a mullah preaching from one of the elaborate marble kürsü, or pulpits under the dome. Lewis beautifully captures the rapt congregation listening to the seated preacher. Unlike Lewis’s more highly composed and finished exhibition works,

this study displays an unusual degree of naturalism. Lady Londonderry's account is inflected by a western delight in the exotic and picturesque. In her description of prayers in Hagia Sophia she states that they: 'gazed upon long ranges of huge-rolled turbans. Hardly any of the new ugly *fez* were here.' By contrast, Lewis shows the majority of the congregation wearing the new Ottoman headgear, suggesting Lewis's interest in verisimilitude. Lewis himself nearly always populated his finished Turkish watercolours with figures in turbans, adopting one himself in his thinly veiled self-portrait *In the Bezestein, El Khan Khalil, Cairo (The Carpet Seller)*, now in Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery and in two photographs showing him in Oriental costume taken in around 1860.

This raises an interesting question about the nature of Lewis's watercolour, its purpose and position within the complex discourse surrounding Orientalist art. Meticulously plotted in pencil on grey paper, Lewis shows a remarkable level of accuracy in his depiction of the interior. Hagia Sophia is shown before a campaign of restoration in the 1840s, when the distinctive calligraphic roundels were added to the piers by Kazasher Mustafa Izzet Efendi. Lewis shows the earlier square banners still in place. Architecturally, Lewis precisely shows the mihrab in the apse added in the fifteenth century by Mehmed II, flanked by two large candlesticks brought from Hungary by Suleiman the Magnificent. Lewis shows the minbar with its distinctive canopy and the lines of bronze wire criss-crossing the dome supporting blue glass lanterns and ostrich eggs. The whole watercolour is handled with remarkable fluency and clarity, capturing the cavernous space and its intricate, layered decoration, with a candour that is not associated with Lewis's exhibition works.



John Frederick Lewis *Interior of the Mosque of Aya Sofya, Istanbul*
Watercolour · 14¼ × 18¾ inches · 362 × 476 mm
Drawn in 1840–1

Much has been written about Lewis's complex relationship with Muslim subject-matter, his depictions of Egyptian interiors and genre scenes. Lewis revelled in combining scrupulous observation, particularly accurate architectural detail, with figures from a cast of eastern tropes conjured from the European imagination. But in Lewis's ingenuous, naturalistic studies, such as this scrupulously observed interior view, he seems more interested in capturing a complex modern scene. Lewis records the racial mix of contemporary Ottoman Constantinople, men in the modern fez seated next to those in the traditional turban and at the centre of the group a young black man, at this date Ottoman territory extended across North Africa. Preserved in exceptional condition, this is one of Lewis's grandest and most consequential drawings remaining in private hands.

NOTES

1. Allan Cunningham, *The Life of Sir David Wilkie; with his journals, tours and critical remarks on works of art*, London, 1843, vol. III, p.323.
2. Frances Vane, Marchioness of Londonderry, *Narrative of a visit to the Courts of Vienna, Constantinople, Athens, Naples &c.*, London, 1844, pp.132–134.

JOHN HAYTER 1800–1895

ADELAIDE KEMBLE IN PERFORMANCE: A SKETCHBOOK

Three-quarter bound in vellum with marbled boards and applied black leather spine label titled in gilt 'Hayter's Sketches,' containing twenty-two leaves of a sketchbook
Pen and ink
8¼ × 6⅝ × ⅝ inches · 210 × 168 × 16 mm
Drawn 1842
Variously inscribed: 'W.M. Rosetti/from Gabriel's books/1882';
'To W.M. Hardinge/with warm regards/1892';
'Pen and ink sketches of Adelaide Kemble afterwards Madam Sartoris in the characters of Norma in Bellini's opera of norma, and Semiramis in Rossinis opera of Semiramide.';
'above 50 sketches in pen, of Mrs Sartoris as Norma & Semiramida done for the finished dra[wings] for the present Duke of Portla[nd]
John Hayter'

COLLECTIONS

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882);
William Michael Rossetti (1829–1919);
William Money Hardinge (1854–1916);
Herbert Marx Meyer (1903–1988);
by descent;
The Potomack Company, 24th April 2025, lot. 1038;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

This sketchbook is filled with drawings showing the soprano Adelaide Kemble singing in her most celebrated roles, made by the successful portrait painter John Hayter. Clearly made in the theatre during live performances, the rapid, kinetic studies capture Kemble as she essayed two of the great heroines of early nineteenth-century Italian opera: Gioachino Rossini's Semiramide and Vincenzo Bellini's Norma. Made during the 1842 season Hayter captures Kemble's remarkable stage presence and celebrated dramatic interpretation of the roles. The sketchbook belonged to Dante Gabriel Rossetti and contains a warm presentation inscription from his brother, William Michael Rossetti to the aesthete and lover of Walter Pater, William Money Hardinge.

Adelaide Kemble came from a distinguished theatrical dynasty, she was the daughter of the actor Charles Kemble, niece of the leading tragedians John Philip Kemble and Sarah Siddons, and sister of the notable abolitionist Fanny Kemble. Trained in London under the tenor John Braham and in Italy under the great soprano Giuditta Pasta, Kemble sang at La Scala, Milan, in 1838, and the same year made her operatic debut as Norma in a production at La Fenice in Venice. After successfully touring in Italy, Kemble returned to Britain in 1841, where she had a brief but spectacular career. Kemble sang at a charity concert at Stafford House, London, in June 1841, and appeared in an English version of *Norma* in November at Covent Garden. She sang Elena in Saverio Mercadante's *Elena da Feltre* in January 1842, Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Caroline in Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto*, as well as appearing in Bellini's *La Sonnambula* and Rossini's *Semiramide*. In December 1842 Kemble gave her final performance as Norma at Covent Garden. Kemble had many admirers, including the fifth duke of Portland.

This volume contains pages from the pocket sketchbook used by Hayter towards the end of the 1842 season and captures Kemble in her roles as Semiramide and Norma. Kemble was celebrated for her stage presence and acting abilities and Hayter's dynamic studies capture Kemble in a series of dramatic moments from the two operas. The kinetic pen and ink drawings fill each page, frequently producing a rapid sequence of closely related studies of Kemble, producing a remarkable record of her performances. Both the scheming Babylonian queen, Semiramide and the tragic Druid priestess, Norma offered plenty of scope for Kemble's acting and Hayter delights in showing Kemble in moments of heightened drama. As Charles Pascoe, the nineteenth-century critic noted: 'Adelaide Kemble was the first to accustom English playgoers, not merely to admit and enjoy the expression of passion in music, but to require of the artist impassioned acting as well as musical feeling. Judged even by the exceptional standard of Pasta, Malibran, Schroeder, and Grisi, Adelaide Kemble was able to maintain her own high place on the operatic stage, whether as a singer of an actress.'[1]

These ad vivum studies were made in preparation for a suite of finished portraits by Hayter of Kemble in her most notable roles. Commissioned by the John Bentinck, 5th Duke of Portland, the portraits remain in the Portland collection at Welbeck Abbey. Kemble's career came to an end on her marriage to the financier Edward Sartoris, the duke never married and became increasingly more eccentric. The Sartoris's lived largely in Rome, where Adelaide cultivated a wide circle of artists, writers and musicians. Frederic Leighton became an admirer, painting several portraits of her daughter, Mary.

NOTES

1. Charkes E. Pascoe, *Our Actors and Actresses: the dramatic list, a record of the performances of living actors and actresses of the British stage*, London, 1880, p.405.

EDWARD BURNE-JONES

A STUDY MADE FOR *MARY MAGDALENE AT THE DOOR OF SIMON THE PHARISEE*

Pencil on paper
7½ × 6¾ inches · 190 × 170 mm
Signed with Rossetti's monogram, lower right
Inscribed: 'drawn (1859) from E. Burne Jones as a study for head of Christ'
Drawn 1859

COLLECTIONS

George Hogarth Turner, Hanover Square;
Bethanie Convent, London;
John Creasey (1908–1973), purchased from the above in 1964;
Private collection;
Keys, Aylsham, 24th July 2025, lot. 387;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

LITERATURE

Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) A Catalogue Raisonné*, Oxford, 1971, vol.I, p.63, cat. no.109F, illustrated vol.II, pl.16;
John Gere, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet*, exh. cat. Birmingham (City Museum and Art Gallery), 1973, p.40, cat. no.117.

EXHIBITION

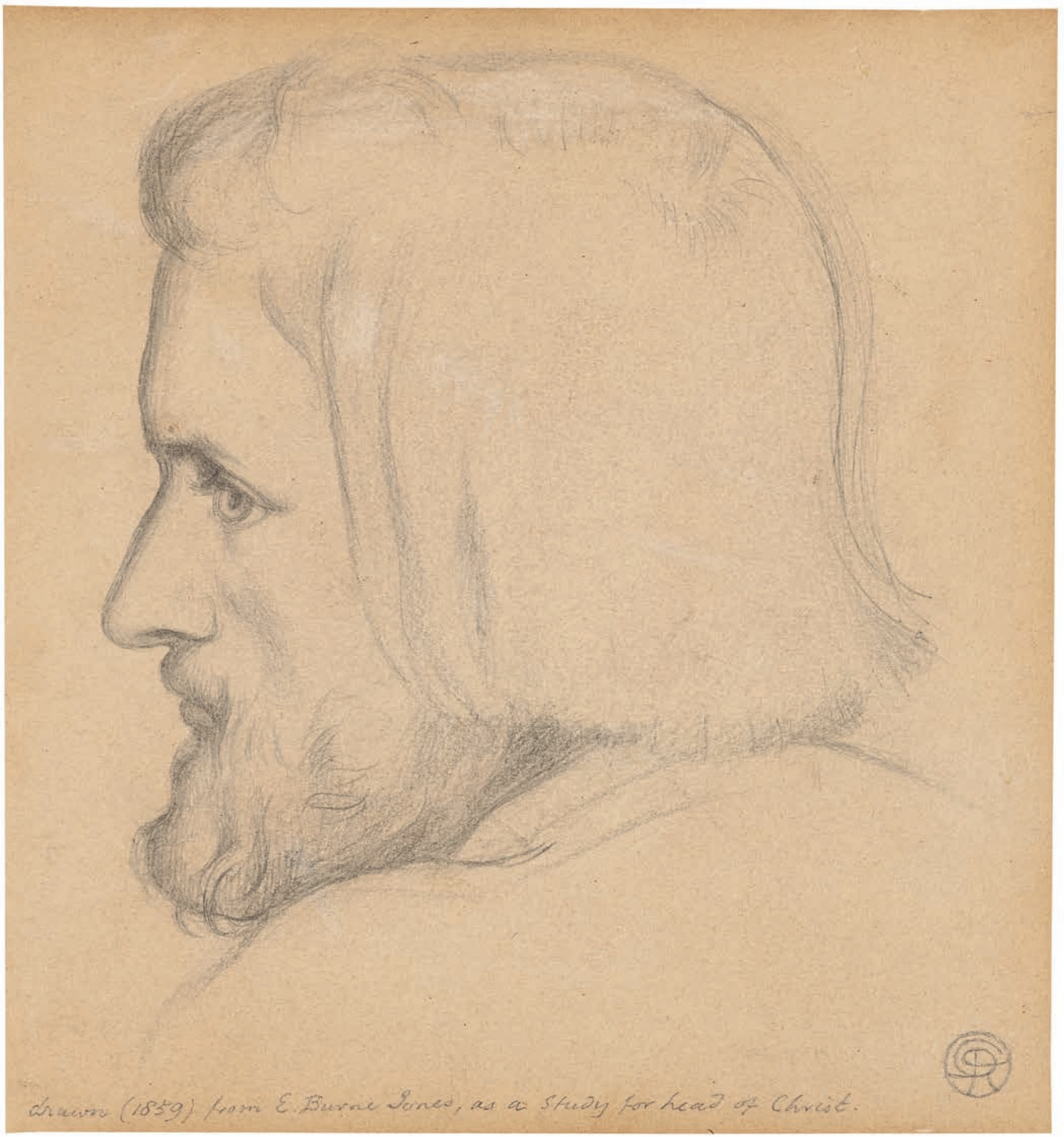
Birmingham, City Museum and Art Gallery, 1973, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter and Poet*, no.117.

This incisive drawing is a remarkable ad vivum study of the young Edward Burne-Jones made by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. This study was completed in preparation for one of Rossetti's most important and remarkable finished drawings, *Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee* now in the collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Drawn in 1859, Rossetti records on the drawing that Burne-Jones was the model for the profile head of Christ in the finished work. Burne-Jones was a great admirer of the older Rossetti, publishing a lavish tribute to Rossetti's illustrations of William Allingham's *Maids of Elfen-Mere* in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* in 1856. As a result, Burne-Jones and Rossetti became great friends, the younger artist introducing Rossetti to William Morris. In this sensitive drawing, Rossetti captures the intense expression of the young Burne-Jones, producing a powerful testament to their friendship and remarkable record of the personal and professional ties of Pre-Raphaelitism.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti was born in London to Italian parents. He was admitted to the Royal Academy schools in December 1845, although he disliked the restrictive regime. In 1847 he applied to Ford Madox Brown, whom he viewed as a sympathetic spirit, for private tuition in painting and drawing. At this time he met William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais, the three artists forming a sketching club, the Cyclographic Society. The activities of this club directly led to the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood at the home of Millais's parents in Gower Street at the end of 1848 or beginning of 1849. A habit of using each other as models rapidly developed; Hunt, for example used his fellow Pre-Raphaelites, Rossetti's brother, William Michael and Charles Allston Collins in his painting of *A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Missionary* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). William Michael Rossetti further modelled as Lorenzo in Millais's *Isabella* (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool) and Rossetti's *Ecce ancilla domini!* (Tate Gallery, London). This latter was one of the last works Rossetti submitted to exhibition, the negative reaction to Pre-Raphaelitism pushed him increasingly to produce watercolours and works on paper he could sell privately.

In 1855 Rossetti published a series of illustrations to *The Maids of Elfen-Mere* for a poem by his friend William Allingham. The designs demonstrate Rossetti's sophisticated and evolving response to medieval art and were enormously admired by contemporaries. Rossetti's vision of Arthurian romance particularly inspired William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. Neither had met Rossetti when they recruited him as a contributor to their *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* which Morris founded in 1856 to promote his ideas about art and poetry. In February 1857, Rossetti wrote to William Bell Scott:

'Two young men, projects of the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, have recently come up to town from Oxford, and are now very intimate friends of mine. Their names are Morris and Jones. They have turned artists instead of taking up any other career to which the university generally leads, and both are men of real genius. Jones's designs are marvels of finish and imaginative detail, unequalled by anything unless perhaps Albert Durer's finest works.'



drawn (1859) from E. Burne Jones, as a study for head of Christ.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti *Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee*

Pen and Indian ink on paper mounted on fine linen on a stretcher · 20 × 18 inches · 508 × 457 mm · Drawn in 1858
Photograph © The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

Dante Gabriel Rossetti *Portrait of Miss Ruth Herbert*

Graphite with pen and black ink on white paper
8⅛ × 6½ inches · 207 × 166 mm · Drawn in 1858
© Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

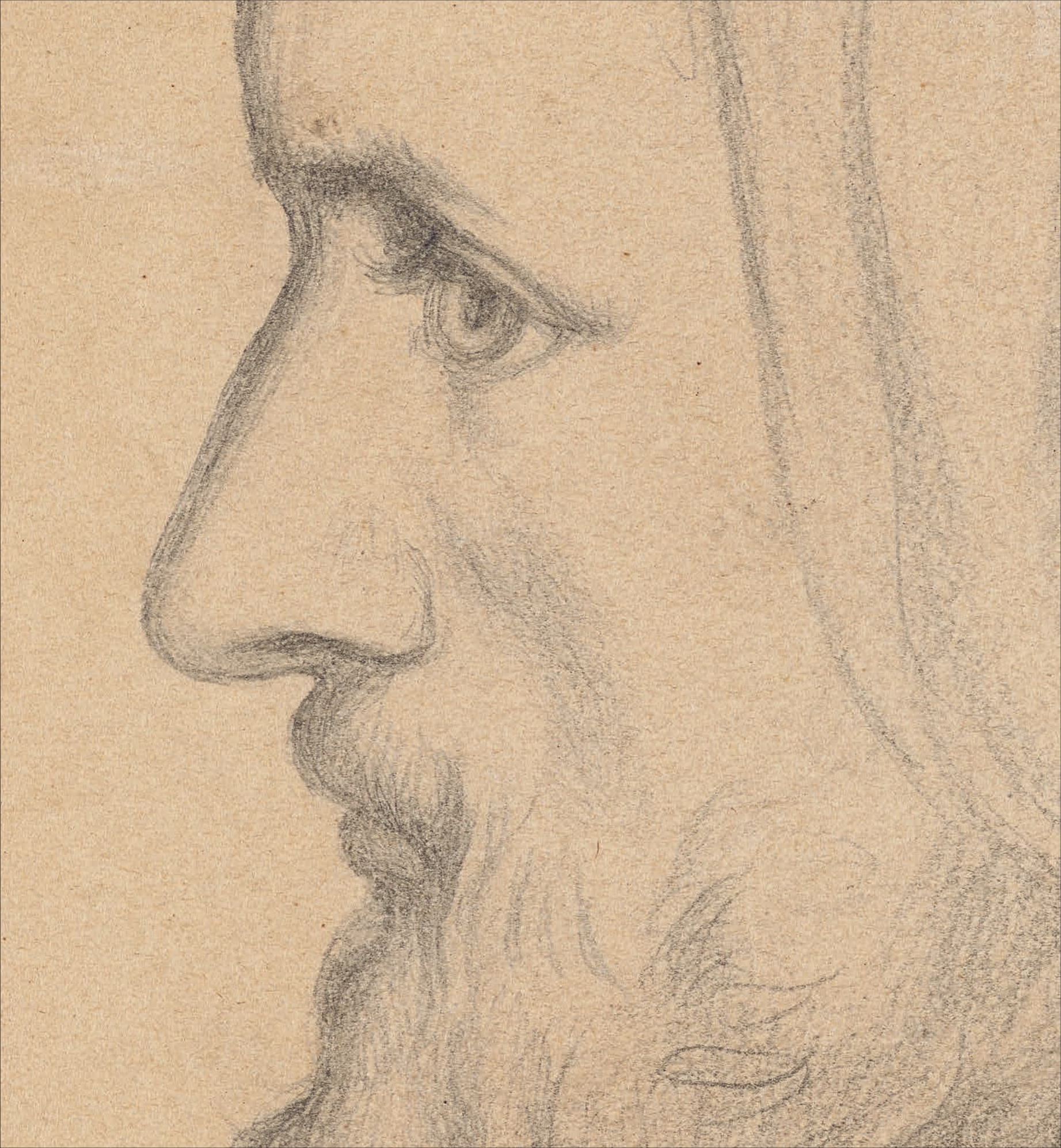
That summer Morris and Rossetti visited Oxford, being given the commission to paint the upper walls of the Oxford Union's debating-hall with scenes from *Le Morte d'Arthur* and to decorate the roof between the open timbers. A roster of young painters were recruited to help complete the project along with two local models, Bessie and Jane Burden, the latter would go on to marry Morris in 1859, before becoming Rossetti's muse and mistress.

The present drawing dates from this febrile, productive moment, when Rossetti, Morris and Burne-Jones were collaborating on the decoration of the Oxford Union. Rossetti had begun to prepare the elaborate composition of *Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee* in 1853 but the densely worked drawing was not finished until 1859, at which point Rossetti decided to use Burne-Jones as the model for the profile portrait of Christ. The scene depicted was described in detail by Rossetti himself: 'two houses opposite each other, one that of Simon the Pharisee, where Christ and Simon, with other guests, are seated at table. In the opposite house a great banquet is held, and feasters are trooping to it dressed in cloth of gold and crowned with flowers … Mary Magdalene … has been in the procession, but suddenly turned aside at the sight of Christ, and is pressing forward up the stairs to Simon's house.'[1] Rossetti had already persuaded the actress Ruth Herbert to sit for the figure of Mary Magdalene writing to William Bell Scott that she: 'has the most varied and highest expression I ever saw in a woman's face, besides abundant beauty, golden hair, etc. Did you ever see her? O my eye! She has sat to me now and will sit to me for Mary Magdalene.'[2] Rossetti's careful, expressive portrait study of Ruth Herbert survives in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Rossetti evidently decided the youthful, intense and bearded features of Burne-Jones provided the ideal model for Christ. The present assured profile portrait drawing was undoubtedly made from life, Surtees quotes a letter from the novelist George Meredith stating that the architect Philip Webb had actually seen Burne-Jones sit for the drawing.[3] In the finished work, Christ is shown through a window, essentially separated from Mary Magdalene and other revellers. Rossetti relies on the profile design to impart both Christ's humanity and sympathy, as Rossetti himself explained: 'Christ looks towards her from within, waiting till she shall reach him.' The finished drawing was much admired by John Ruskin who was eager to exchange it for a work of *St Catherine*, which he had already bespoken. He wrote to Rossetti: 'The Magdalene is magnificent to my mind, in every possible way: it stays by me.'

The present beautifully modelled drawing demonstrates Rossetti's mastery at observation, whilst the clarity of the line helped enshrine Burne-Jones's features as a Pre-Raphaelite archetype of Christ. Rossetti would return to this drawing for the design for a stained glass window of *The Sermon on the Mount*, again using Burne-Jones as the model for Christ.[4]

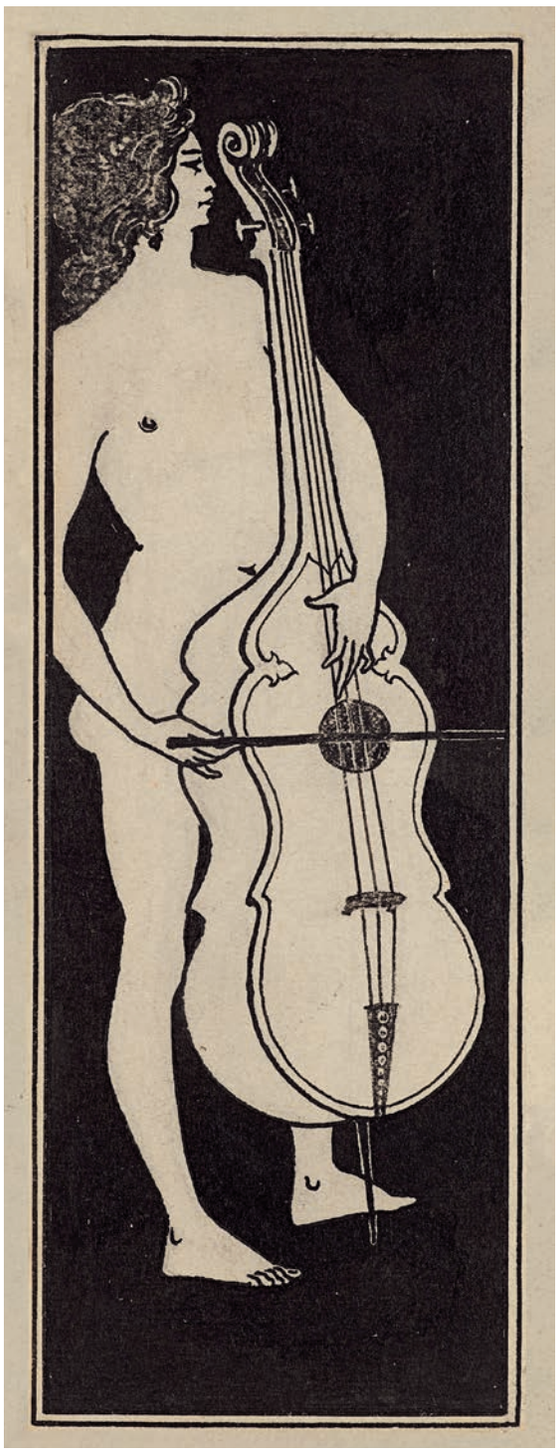
NOTES

1. *Pall Mall Budget*, 22 January 1891, p.14.
2. Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) A Catalogue Raisonné*, Oxford, 1971, vol.I, p.64.
3. Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) A Catalogue Raisonné*, Oxford, 1971, vol.I, p.63.
4. Virginia Surtees, *The Paintings and Drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) A Catalogue Raisonné*, Oxford, 1971, vol.I, cat. no.142, p.84.



AUBREY BEARDSLEY 1872–1898

THE BASS PLAYER



Pen, brush and Indian ink over traces of pencil
6⅝ × 2⅛ inches · 176 × 61 mm
Drawn: February – March 1895

COLLECTIONS

John Lane (1854–1925);
Carl Hentschel (1864 -1930);
Christopher Carl Hentschel (1891–1979); son of the above;
Sotheby's, 19th July 1967, lot 12;
Brian Reade (1913–1989), acquired from the above;
By inheritance to 2025;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

LITERATURE

Courier Français, 17 February 1895, p.10;
Aymer Vallance, 'List of Drawings by Aubrey Beardsley' in Robert Ross, *Aubrey Beardsley*, London, 1909, no.127;
Albert Eugene Gallatin, *Aubrey Beardsley: Catalogue of Drawings and Bibliography*, New York, 1945, no.974;
Brian Reade, *Aubrey Beardsley*, London, 1967, p.348, no.377, repr. pl.379;
Brigid Brophy, *Black and White: A Portrait of Aubrey Beardsley*, New York, 1969, p.50 and 54;
Milly Heyd, *Aubrey Beardsley: Symbol, Mask, and Self-Irony*, New York, 1986, p.226;
Linda Gertner Zatlin, 'Beardsley Redresses Venus', *Victorian Poetry*, vol.28, no.3–4, 1990, pp.73, 75;
Simon Wilson and Linda Gertner Zatlin, *Aubrey Beardsley: A Centenary Tribute*, Tokyo, 1998, p.240, no.124;
Linda Gertner Zatlin, *Aubrey Beardsley: a catalogue raisonné*, New Haven and London, 2016, vol. II, p.165, no.950.

EXHIBITED

Kanagawa, Kawasaki City Museum; Wakayama, Museum of Modern Art; and Gunma, Museum of Modern Art, *Aubrey Beardsley: A Centenary Tribute*, 1998, no.124.

This exquisite drawing was made by Aubrey Beardsley whilst he was artistic editor of *The Yellow Book* and may well have been intended for publication. The sinuous design, showing a beautiful, naked youth playing a double bass contains all the languid eroticism and ambiguity of action which characterise Beardsley's most celebrated illustrations. Aubrey Beardsley was perhaps the most remarkable and graphically inventive designer working in Britain in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the present drawing is a rare sheet, preserved in exceptional condition and with an unbroken provenance.

Aubrey Beardsley was born in Brighton and had a hard childhood in London during which he contracted tuberculosis, a disease which would eventually result in his death at the age of just 25. Beardsley began his career as a clerk, before pursuing art professionally on the advice of Sir Edward Burne-Jones and Pierre Puvis de Chavannes. In 1892 he attended the classes at the Westminster School of Art, then under Professor Fred Brown. The same year, Beardsley travelled to Paris where he discovered the poster art of Henri Toulouse-Lautrec and the Parisian fashion for Japanese prints. His first commission was to illustrate Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* for the publishing house of JM. Dent. Beardsley's illustrations were widely praised and the subject of an article by the graphic art expert Joseph Pennell which appeared in the inaugural issue of *The Studio* magazine. Amongst the drawings Pennell reproduced was a design for the climactic scene of Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*. This, in turn, convinced Wilde and his publisher John Lane, to commission Beardsley to illustrate an English edition of Wilde's play. The result was one of the most remarkable graphic projects of the period. Beardsley's designs included some with caricatures of Wilde, several with highly indecent details, and others which Beardsley declared 'simply beautiful but quite irrelevant.'[1] The critical reaction was negative, *The Times* declared Beardsley's illustrations to be 'unintelligible for the most part and, in so far as they are intelligible, repulsive.'

Following the publication of *Salome* Beardsley became one of the founders of the quarterly literary periodical *The Yellow Book*, acting as its first art editor. Beardsley's contributions were graphically daring, iconographically obscure and frequently obliquely erotic. The eroticism of the images forced *The Yellow Book's* publisher, John Lane, to police Beardsley's contributions closely, which in turn tempted Beardsley to present ever more complex and daring images. It is possible that the present drawing, which shows the languid figure of a youth profiled against black, dextrously playing the sinuous bass, was considered too explicit for inclusion and was one of those designs rejected by Lane. Certainly, the design did not appear in the four issues of *The Yellow Book* on which Beardsley worked.

Beardsley's best illustrations are frequently studied essays in eroticism. In the present drawing, the beautiful young man holds the bass close to his naked body, the string instrument, with its sinuous shape initially recalls the female form. But Beardsley subtly subverts the heterosexual dynamic by elongating the neck of the bass, giving it a decidedly phallic appearance. The beautiful youth is shown idly bowing and fingering the instrument, which is

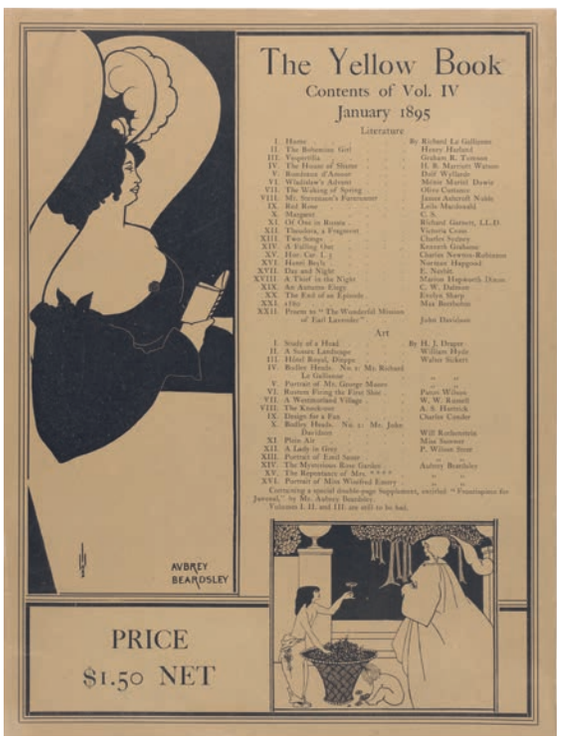
pressed against his own naked genitals, it is an action which Linda Gertner Zatlin has suggested implies masturbation. Beardsley enjoyed the inherent ambiguity of such images, forcing the viewer to seek meaning. For Beardsley the sexual ambivalent youth is a powerful motif, in his most notorious illustrations to Wilde's *Salome*, Beardsley shows a grotesque, priapic old man fondling Herodias, whilst a beautiful youth stands impassively watching. This illustration did not escape the intervention of Lane, who insisted on the addition of a fig leaf in the final plate.

In form, the drawing shows both Beardsley's ability to absorb diverse visual stimuli and his awareness of modern printing techniques. The sinuous line of the figure seen in profile recalls Greek attic vases, particularly the way in which the figure is created in reverse. Beardsley was highly aware of the technological advances being made in modern printing. He always drew with the intention of his designs being reproduced by the recently perfected technique of printing from zinc line blocks made photographically from original drawings. This method made it possible to capture precisely the wiry intricately calligraphic character of his pen line, as Stephen Calloway has observed 'at once so nervous and so assured.'[2]

Shortly after Beardsley made this drawing *The Yellow Book* and Beardsley were overrun by scandal. Oscar Wilde's libel trial against the Marquess of Queensbury collapsed in April 1895. Although Wilde never contributed to *The Yellow Book* in the popular imagination he was associated with it and many of its contributors, especially Beardsley. The offices of John Lane in Vigo Street were attacked by a mob and Beardsley was forced to flee to Dieppe, he remained in France until his death a few years later.

NOTES

1. Eds. Stephen Calloway and Caroline Corbeau-Parsons, *Aubrey Beardsley*, exh. cat. London (Tate Gallery), 2020, p.17.
2. Eds. Stephen Calloway and Caroline Corbeau-Parsons, *Aubrey Beardsley*, exh. cat. London (Tate Gallery), 2020, p.10.



Aubrey Beardsley Poster for *The Yellow Book*, Volume IV, January 1895

Lithograph and relief process
Image: 14 13/16 × 10⅞ inches · 376 × 277 mm
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Martin Birnbaum, 1957

DAME LAURA KNIGHT 1877–1970

A STUDY OF A BABY

Watercolour and charcoal
18⅝ × 25 inches · 475 × 635 mm
Signed 'Laura Knight' (lower right)
Drawn 1956

COLLECTIONS

Laura Knight;
'The Contents of Laura Knight's Studio', sold by her executors, Sotheby's, London, 22 July 1971;
Abbott & Holder, London, 1972;
Private Collection, Australia;
Bonhams, 9th September 2024, lot. 26;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

Dame Laura Knight *Sunday afternoon in Hyde Park*
Oil on canvas
30 × 25 inches; 762 × 635 mm
Exhibited Royal Academy, 1956, no.143.
Private collection

'Madame Yevonde' (Yevonde Middleton),
Dame Laura Knight in her studio, 1967
Bromide print · 14⅜ × 11¼ inches · 364 × 286 mm

This tender drawing, an ad vivum study of a sleepy baby, was used by Laura Knight in preparation for a painting she exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1956. Knight wrote in 1965, conjuring an evocative image of her studio with 'every drawer, every shelf, every cupboard' stuffed with drawings from fifty years ago sitting alongside those made 'only so long ago as yesterday.' This accumulated visual archive is shown in a portrait photograph taken by Yevonde on 19th September 1967 in which Knight is shown standing in front of the present drawing.

Laura Johnson was trained at the Nottingham School of Art, where she met Harold Knight, a fellow student. The pair were married in 1903 and spent time living and painting in Staithes in North Yorkshire before moving to Newlyn in Cornwall. Knight achieved considerable success exhibiting breezy coastal landscapes at the Royal Academy. Made an Associate Academician in 1927, In 1937 Knight was made the first female Royal Academician since Angelica Kauffman. Throughout her career Knight was fascinated by observing and drawing marginalised communities. During the 1920s Knight produced a remarkable sequence of drawings and paintings of circus performers, observing acts from the wings or preparing in the dressing room, capturing with remarkable humanity the complex transient world of the itinerant performer. Knight produced an acclaimed series of studies of Black patients in one of the segregated wards of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore in 1927. In the decades after the war Knight produced a series of powerful studies of the Romany Gypsies.

It is this candid and unflinching quality that Knight brings to the current work. Knight has drawn rapidly in charcoal, capturing a young child wrapped in a series of blankets, sucking on its fingers. Watercolour wash has been added to the sinuous charcoal line to produce a very complete image of the child. The informal naturalism of Knight's study was subsequently translated into the exhibited oil *Sunday afternoon in Hyde Park* which was shown at the Royal Academy in 1956. The finished painting loses something of the power and spontaneous quality of the drawing, showing the baby in the arms of an older sibling asleep on the grass. The painting – and its preparatory study – can be associated with Knight's interest in observing people at leisure, such as her sequence of paintings depicting spectators at Ascot and the Derby. The drawing is unusually large and finished and was almost certainly intended for independent exhibition, this explains why it appears framed hanging in Knight's studio in the 1967 portrait taken by Yevonde.

EDMUND BLAMPIED 1886–1966

COLOUR SYMPHONY

Watercolour and ink on paper
13¾ × 9⅞ inches · 350 × 250 mm
Signed and dated 1928

COLLECTIONS
Wheelock Whitney;
Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd.

LITERATURE
Marguerite Syvret, *Edmund Blampied: A Biography of the Artist, 1886–1966*, Jersey, 1986, p.90.

EXHIBITION
Possibly, New York, Schwartz Galleries, 507 Madison Avenue, 1932, cat. no's 43–47.

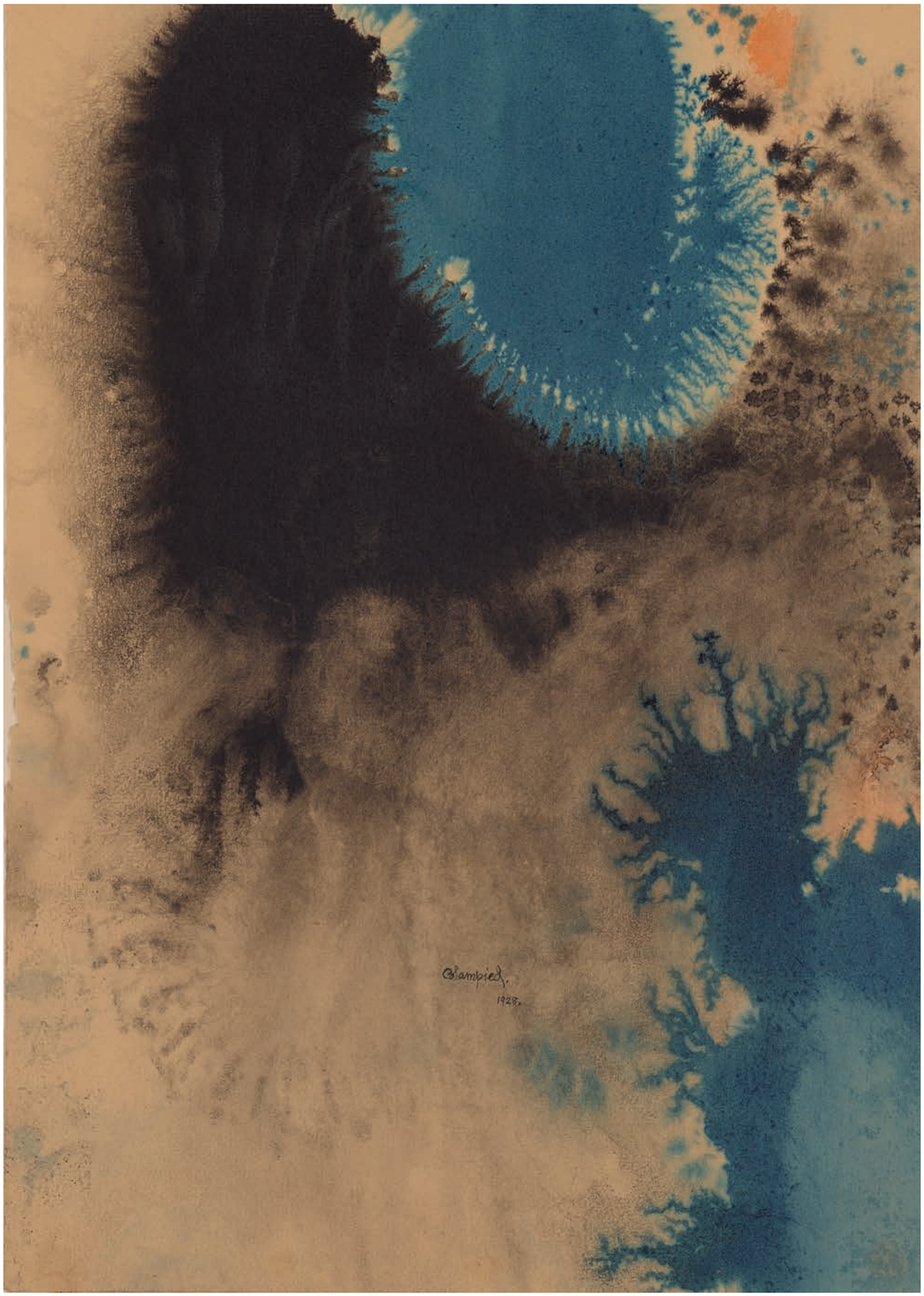
This watercolour is one of a remarkable series produced by the British artist Edmund Blampied, the abstract compositions were made whilst Blampied was convalescing from a serious illness in 1928. These innovative works were made by placing damp paper on glass and allowing watercolour pigment to diffuse through the substrate to create organic compositions of powerful abstraction. Blampied called these watercolours 'Colour Symphonies' or 'Colour Poems', signing them prominently and exhibiting five at Schwartz Galleries in New York in 1932.

Edmund Blampied was born in Jersey in the Channel Islands and trained in London at the Lambeth School of Art under the Royal Academician, Philip Connard. In 1905 Blampied transferred to the London County Council School of Photo-engraving and Lithography at Bolt Court. At Bolt Court Blampied learnt to etch and he formed a relationship with the art dealers and publishers Ernest Brown and Wilfred and Cecil Phillips who ran the Leicester Galleries in London. In 1915 Blampied showed three prints at the Leicester Galleries in the first of a series of exhibitions called *Modern Masters of Etching*. Blampied's most celebrated print, *Driving home in the rain* was shown to great critical and financial success at the Leicester Galleries in 1916. In 1925 two of Blampied's lithographs were part of a group submission to the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industrields Modernes* in Paris, this was the exhibition which gave rise to the term 'Art Deco'.

Blampied was notable for the diversity of his work and its technical facility. As a printmaker Blampied occupies a key place in the final generation of artists associated with the etching revival; his prints combining the rich tonality of earlier artists such as Muirhead Bone and David Young Cameron, with an incisive graphic line. His prints were widely collected, particularly in North America where Blampied showed at galleries in New York and Boston throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Blampied was noted for his consummate technique as a watercolourist and his most celebrated exhibition works were in considerable demand. Influenced by his etching technique, Blampied clearly worked on damp paper, producing highly atmospheric works in which forms emerge from – and are modelled by – the shadowy depths of watercolour.

In 1928, whilst recuperating from illness, Blampied experimented with the medium, using damp paper as the vehicle for receiving watercolour and inks; floating pigment on sheets of glass and blotting them on the damp paper producing a complex series of abstract designs which he variously described as 'Colour Symphonies' or 'Colour Poems'. Blampied had spent the previous year travelling extensively on the Continent and Africa and it is possible he was aware of European abstraction. Given the date of these works, Blampied may have known the work of Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee.

Whilst completely abstract, the sheets are not wholly organic or accidental. Blampied has clearly manipulated the paper to cause liquid paint to run in different directions; added inks of differing viscosity and density and introduced a careful range of colours. Most of the sheets are carefully signed and dated by Blampied indicating their orientation and underscoring their status as completed art works. The title Blampied gave the works when he exhibited them in New York in 1932 'Colour Symphonies' suggests a powerful analogy with music, a trope that was being actively pursued by European abstract artists at this date. We know that at least one Blampied 'Colour Symphonies' was sold at the New York exhibition in 1932, it was acquired by Moore Achenbach (1878–1963) and is now in the collection of the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco.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