Study of a Churchyard

John Constable

Sold



REF: 586

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Description

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John Constable, R.A. (1776-1837)
Study of a Churchyard

Pencil on laid paper
9.5 by 7.5cm., 3 ¾ by 3 in.

This drawing dates from 1833 and was a preliminary study for an illustration to stanza V of Thomas Gray's `Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'. Constable had been asked by his friend John Martin to design some illustrations for a new edition of Gray's poems which he was planning. Three engravings after works by Constable appeared in the first edition published in 1834 and one more in the second edition of 1836.

Two watercolour studies for the engraving are in the British Museum including the watercolour which was engraved for publication (see Parris, Fleming-Williams and Shields, op.cit., nos.298 and 299, p.173, ill.). This drawing is a study for the left hand part of the watercolour and is of an unknown church - it does not appear to show Stoke Poges church where Gray wrote his `Elegy'. The right hand part of the watercolour is based on a tiny sketch of a man leaning on a fence from a 1813 sketchbook (see Fleming-Williams, op.cit., ill.)

Provenance:
Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, 18th November 1971, lot 50 (part of an album);
William Darby;
By descent until 2008

Literature:
Ian Fleming-Williams, Constable - Landscape Watercolours and Drawings, Tate Gallery, 1976, p.106, pl.77;
Leslie Parris, Ian Fleming-Williams and Conal Shields, Constable - Paintings, Watercolours & Drawings, 1976, p.174, under no.301;
Graham Reynolds, The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable, 1984, no.33.19, pl. 873

Exhibited:
London, William Darby, Exhibition of Drawings by John Constable R.A., May 1972, no.24;
London, Jocelyn Fielding Gallery, An Exhibition of Drawings by John Constable R.A., 1979

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