Portrait of Capt James Monro

John Downman



REF: 1364

Height: 19.5 cm (7.7")

Width: 15.6 cm (6.1")

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Description

John Downman, A.R.A. (1750-1824)
Portrait of Captain James Monro (1756-1806)

Three-quarter length, in profile, the sea beyond
Signed lower left and dated 1789
Watercolour and coloured chalks heightened with touches of bodycolour, oval
19.8 by 16.1 cm., 7 ¾ by 6 ¼ in.

Provenance:
By descent in the Monro family

James Monro was the second son of John Monro (1715-1791) and his wife Elizabeth and elder brother of the collector Dr Thomas Monro (1759-1833). The present watercolour, with the view to the sea and shipping beyond, attests to James' position as captain in the East India Company, who regularly skippered ships between Britain and India. He is recorded as master of the 'Houghton', the command of which he eventually sold for £8,000.

Downman drew other members of the Monro family in the same manner, his sisters Charlotte (Courtauld Institute of Art, London, no. D.1967.WS.40) and Elizabeth (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, no. 2314.14), as well as his younger brother Thomas (Martyn Gregory Gallery).

Dr Thomas Monro followed his father and grandfather into the medical position and like them became chief physician of Bethlem Hospital. However, he is better known today for his passion for art and for encouraging aspiring artists, including Thomas Girtin, J.M.W. Turner, John Varley, Joshua Cristall, Peter de Wint, William Henry Hunt, and John Linnell amongst others, at his informal academy at his house.

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