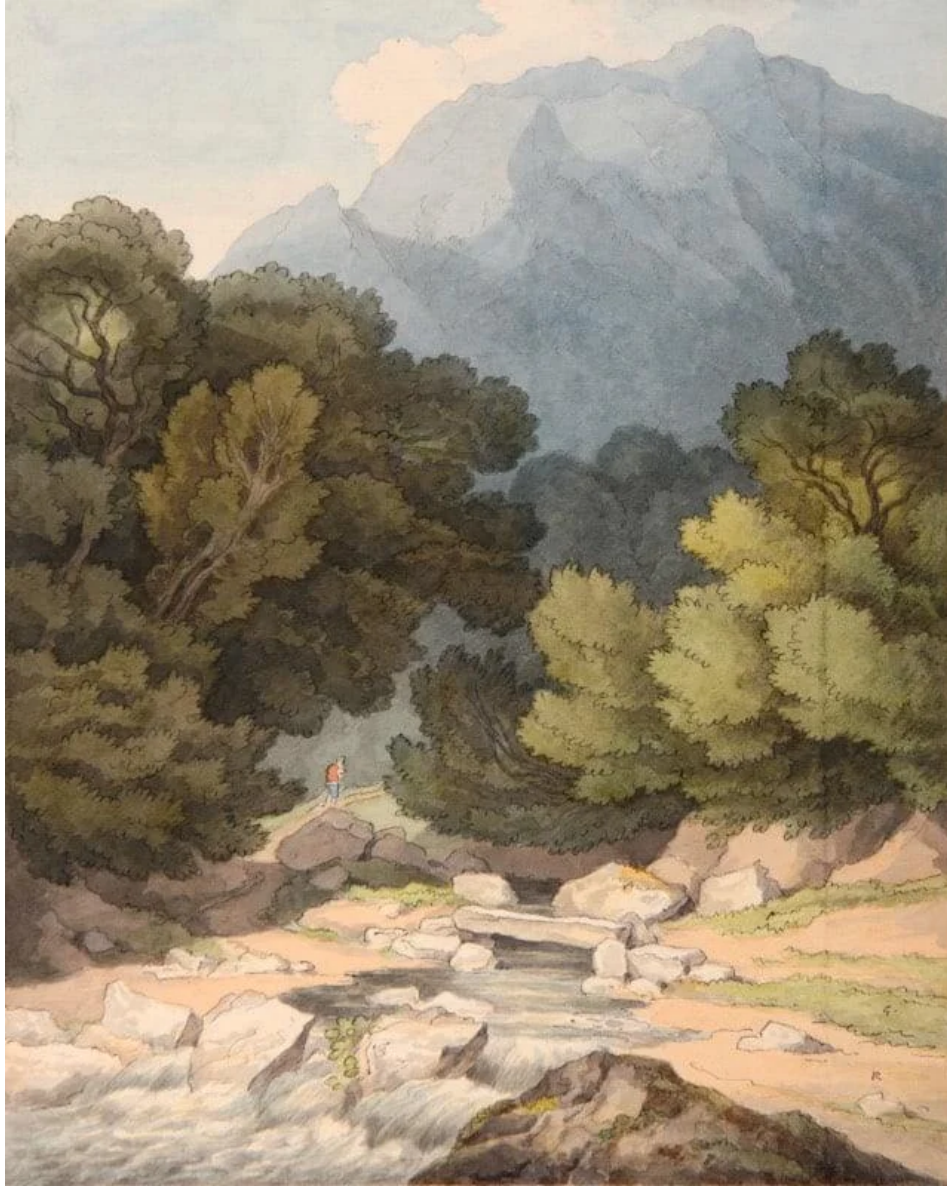


John White Abbott



Downstone Rock from Saugh Mill, Devon

Reference: 10919

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

Dimensions:

Height: 21 cm / 8¼ in
Width: 16.70 cm / 6⅝ in

Inscribed with colour notes l.r., signed with initials, inscribed and dated on reverse of original backing: Downstone Rock from Saugh Mill.Devon./JWA Sept. 21.1831./No. 18., pen and grey ink and watercolour with gum arabic, on original washline mount

21 x 16.7 cm; 8 ¼ x 6 ½ inches

Provenance : With Andrew Wyld, London; The Flannery collection, UK, and by descent until 2018.

Abbott was one of the best amateur watercolourists of the late eighteenth century. An Exeter surgeon and apothecary, he lived in the city until 1825. He exhibited paintings at the Royal Academy from 1793 and received contemporary acclaim for the style of his work. The artist John Downman said that Abbott 'prefers his drawings before his paintings, as they are done with more spirit'. 1

In 1825 Abbott inherited Fordland, a Devon estate, from his uncle James White, an Exeter barrister and non-conformist, who was a close friend of Francis Towne. Abbott became a patron and pupil of Towne's, and his linear style shows the artist's influence. After he moved to Fordland, Abbott devoted himself to drawing.

This view appears to show Dewerstone Rock seen from Shaugh Mill, near Shaugh Prior, on Dartmoor. Shaugh Mill was used for papermaking and stood by a stream of spring water. 2 In 1790 the papermaker was Richard Howard. It appears to have been a popular spot for artists to record, and was painted by J. F. Lewis and J. M. W. Turner amongst others. Another view by Abbott entitled Downstone Rock from a different aspect is in the collection of the Provost and Fellows of Eton College.

1. Joseph Farington, The Diary of Joseph Farington, republished 1978-1984; entry for 26 June 1804; vol. VI, p. 2362.

2. A. H. Shorter and R. L. Hills, Studies on the History of Papermaking in Britain, 1993. I am grateful to April Marjoram for her comments about this view.