

John White Abbott



Trees in a rocky landscape, probably Peamore near Exeter, Devon

Reference: 10921

Dimensions:

Height: 24.80 cm / 9³/₄ in

Width: 31.50 cm / 12³/₈ in

KT442

Pen and grey ink and grey washes

24.8 x 31.5 cm.; 9 ³/₄ x 12 ³/₈ inches

Provenance

Cyril and Shirley Fry until 2021

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

A surgeon and apothecary in Exeter for about twenty years, drawing was John White Abbott's hobby, and he was the best-known pupil of Francis Towne (1739-1816). He exhibited oil paintings regularly from 1793 to 1805 at the Royal Academy as an honorary exhibitor (a non-professional artist).

Peamore is an historic country estate near Exeter where White Abbott and Towne made a number of watercolours. The present work has similarities with a drawing of the quarry at Peamore dated 1796 in the collection of the British Museum (2012,7037.1). The Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, have a drawing of Peamore dating from 1802 with similar leaning trees.

The Devon topographer Rev. John Swete wrote in 1789, 'the chief beauty of Peamore lies in the undulating form of its grounds, rising and falling in the regular alternation of hills and dales; in its woods, groves and trees and in a quarry which surrounded by a thicket of high towering oaks, beech, etc., is one of the grandest and most romantic objects in the country' *Travels in Georgian Devon: The Illustrated Journals of the Reverend John Swete, 1789-1800*, edited by Todd Gray and Margery Rowe (Halsgrove, 1997), Vol. 1, p. 56.

Peamore is about five miles south of Exeter and visitors and artists were permitted to explore its grounds. From 1774 until 1795 it belonged to the Coxe family until the death of Henry Hippisley Coxe when it was sold to Samuel Kekewich, in whose family it remained until 1947.

In 1825 White Abbott inherited the Devon estate of Fordland from his uncle James White. He delighted in drawing the woodland on his estate, developing the style he learnt from Francis Towne his drawing master with sophisticated handling of light and shade in the depiction of trees in monochrome.