

James Ward, RA



Mrs Arbuthnot's cow Maria

Reference: 10993

Dimensions:

Height: 25.50 cm / 10 in

Width: 35.60 cm / 14 in

SOLD

KT344

Signed with monogram and dated l.l.: JW RA. 1822 and inscribed on original mount l.c.: MARIA/ By Mr. R. Colling's George. Herd Book. P. 396, pencil
25.5 x 35.6 cm; 10 x 14 inches

Provenance

Presumably Charles and Harriet Arbuthnott, 1822;
The Fine Art Society, 1972;

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

Anonymous sale; James Adam & Sons, Dublin, 6 March 1973, lot 342;
John Ross, by descent until 2019

Ward is primarily remembered as a painter of animals. In 1800 he was engaged by the Board of Agriculture and Josiah Boydell, the print publisher, to portray two hundred examples of the various breeds of cattle, sheep and swine to illustrate the surveys of livestock which the Board had undertaken in England, Scotland and Wales. Boydell was to engrave the drawings for which Ward was to receive 15 guineas. Although the project never saw completion it led to the artist's introduction to a group of rich patrons and many commissions.

Maria was part of a commission of lithographs of cattle from Charles Arbuthnott (1767-1850), and specifically referred to by name, in a letter to the artist dated 30 October 1822, in which he expressed his desire to receive a lithographic drawing of Maria, presumably the present drawing (see Edward J. Nygren, 'James Ward RA (1769-1859): Papers and Patrons', The Walpole Society, vol. LXXV, 2013).

Charles Arbuthnott was a Tory politician, a diplomat, who served as ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1804-1807 and a good friend of the Duke of Wellington. His second wife, Harriet Fane, who owned Maria the cow, was a hostess at Wellington's dinners and the author of a diary recording political intrigues of the day.

John Ross (1919-2011) built up a collection of drawings and watercolours at his home at Knockmore, outside Dublin. He was an active member and Chairman of the Irish Friends of the National Collections, playing an important role in securing many great works for the Irish national collection.