

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**Peter DE WINT (Hanley 1784 - London 1849)**

**Wooded Hills and a Valley near Lowther, Westmoreland**

Watercolour over traces of an underdrawing in pencil.

Inscribed Lowther 433 on the verso, backed.

457 x 572 mm. (18 x 22 1/2 in.)

Datable to the late 1830s or early 1840s, this exceptionally large watercolour depicts a view near Lowther Castle in Cumbria, the seat of one of Peter De Wint's foremost patrons, the MP and collector William Lowther, 2nd Earl of Lonsdale (1787-1872). The Earl inherited Lowther Castle in 1802, and was a keen supporter of artists and writers, including William Wordsworth. De Wint produced numerous views of the Lowther estate between 1834 and 1843, and the posthumous sale of the contents of his studio in 1850 included sixteen views of Lowther Castle and the surrounding park. As the artist's widow (and first biographer) noted of De Wint, 'His love for nature was excessive, and his study from nature constant and unwearied. He never tired of sketching, which was his great delight...He preferred the North of England, and spent much time in Yorkshire, Cumberland and Westmorland. He was frequently at Lowther Castle, where, through the kindness of the then Earl of Lonsdale and his family, he was enabled to visit the most remote and picturesque spots in that wild and beautiful district.' Other views of the Lowther estate by Peter De Wint include drawings and watercolours in the Usher Gallery in Lincoln, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Among stylistically comparable watercolours of the same period is a Wooded River Landscape in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, while another view near Lowther, of the same size as the present sheet, was formerly in the Bacon collection and is recorded in a photograph in the Witt Library of the Courtauld Institute of Art.

## **Exhibitions**

London, Fry Gallery and Brighton, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, Peter de Wint (1784–1849): Bicentenary Loan Exhibition, 1984-1985, no.33; London, Royal Academy and Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750-1880, 1993, no.121 (as Trees at Lowther, Westmoreland).

### **Literature:**

Hammond Smith, Peter DeWint 1784-1849, London, 1982, p.149; Andrew Wilton and Anne Lyles, The Great Age of British Watercolours 1750-1880, exhibition catalogue, 1993, p.224, no.121, illustrated pl.238 (where dated c.1840-1845); Huon Mallalieu, 'Conquering the Computer', Country Life, 4 August 2021, p.131, fig.6; Alex Capon, 'De Wint was a Fry favourite', The Antiques Trade Gazette, 23 August 2021, p.20.

### **Artist description:**

The son of a Staffordshire physician, Peter De Wint was trained in the London studio of the portrait painter and engraver John Raphael Smith. There he met the young artist William Hilton from Lincoln, who was to become a lifelong friend, as well as his brother-in-law. Released from his apprenticeship in 1806, De Wint studied briefly with the landscape artist John Varley but in general seems to have begun his independent career without further training. He exhibited landscape paintings and watercolours at the Royal Academy, the British Institution, the Associated Artists in Water Colours and, in particular, the Old Water Colour Society, where he showed almost yearly between 1810 and his death. His work soon found favour with critics, and he began to establish a particular reputation, with regular sales to a large number of devoted patrons and collectors of his work. De Wint undertook sketching tours throughout England and Wales, with a particular fondness for his native Lincolnshire, as well as Derbyshire, Yorkshire and the Lake District. (He never seems to have had much desire to travel abroad, however, and his only foreign tour was a brief visit to Normandy in 1828.) Among his favourite subjects were rivers and streams, harvest scenes and pastoral views. De Wint also produced a significant number of topographical landscape prints, many of which were published in book form. The artist died in 1849, at the age of sixty-six. Writing some seventy years later, a fellow watercolourist noted that 'No artist ever came nearer to painting a perfect picture than did Peter DeWint. His sense of colour was more brilliant, his choice of subject matter more apt, and his judgment as to the exact time when a picture should be left, better than any of his contemporaries.'

As Andrew Wilton has written of the artist, 'De Wint's work is characterised by a warm range of browns and greens that obviously derives from [Thomas] Girtin; later, he varied this with touches of unmixed red or blue. But he did not make the study of climate a priority. His chief concern remained the creation of subtle and beautifully articulated compositions based on stretches of open or wooded country, often in the broad Wolds of his own Lincolnshire...When well preserved, his watercolours often display fine atmospheric effects.'