

'The Art of Seeing Nature'

Ten Drawings by John Constable

Lowell Libson
& Jonny Yarker Ltd
British Art

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Preface

It is particularly fitting that we should be showing this group of ten drawings by John Constable in Paris, the only city in which he achieved any real critical success during his lifetime. In 1824 Constable sold two of his great exhibition machines, *The Hay Wain* and *View on the Stour* to the Anglo-French dealer John Arrowsmith who showed them at the Paris Salon the same year. They caused a sensation and Constable was awarded a gold medal by Charles X. Constable's popularity amongst French artists and collectors meant that by 1835 there were at least twenty-two paintings by Constable in France. The Louvre houses a number of paintings by Constable, along with one of his very rare intact sketchbooks recording a visit he made to Epsom in 1806.

Our catalogue includes ten drawings which date from throughout Constable's career. These include depictions of familiar Constable landmarks: the churches in his native East Bergholt and the neighbouring village of Stoke-by-Nayland; the River Stour as well as a landscape near Salisbury. More unusual drawings include three sensitive studies of nude models from a sketchbook Constable was using at the Life Academy of the Royal Academy in 1808. Although central to Constable's art, his drawings have received far less scholarly attention than his painted sketches or exhibition works and the accompanying essay offers a brief introduction to Constable as a draughtsman.

It is appropriate that this catalogue is the first to be published by us as Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd combining, as it does, so many of the values and interests that Lowell has nurtured over the years and which we both intend to develop in the future.

LOWELL LIBSON & JONNY YARKER

‘The Art of Seeing Nature’

John Constable as a Draughtsman

In July 1812 John Constable [fig.1] wrote to his future wife, Maria Bicknell, from East Bergholt describing his ‘hermit-like life’:

How much real delight I have had with the study of Landscape this summer. Either I am myself improved in ‘the art of seeing nature’ (which Sir Joshua Reynolds calls painting) or Nature has unveiled her beauties to me with a less fastidious hand – perhaps there may be something of both, so we will divide these fine compliments between us.¹

By 1812 Constable had developed various means for studying his native landscape. Most famously oil sketches, immediate studies in fluid paint on prepared paper or millboard executed out of doors, which have come to dominate discussions of Constable’s approach to landscape. In the decades after 1812 Constable prepared for exhibition a sequence of ambitious, large scale finished paintings which owed their composition and approach to the preparatory studies he made during the periods he spent at East Bergholt. These studies, however, were more often drawn than painted, for drawing occupied a central position in his conception and approach to painting and each of his finished compositions generated a constellation of pencil sketches and preparatory drawings. As Ian Fleming-Williams noted ‘to know and understand Constable as well as to enjoy his art to the full, we need to give almost as much time to the drawings as to the paintings.’²

This is no easy task. Constable’s drawings are beset by problems of interpretation and access. Constable used drawing widely and variously throughout his career presenting the later scholar with problems of classification. Central to this problem is reconstructing why Constable reached for the pencil rather than the brush and in placing his graphic work within the better-known sequence of oil sketches and finished paintings. It is also important to remember that unlike his contemporary J.M.W. Turner, whose preparatory drawings are largely preserved in the Turner Bequest at Tate Britain, Constable’s drawings were widely dispersed after his death. It is notable, for example, that unlike Turner, only a handful of Constable’s sketchbooks remain intact. In reconstructing dismembered sketchbooks, it also becomes clear that a substantial number of Constable’s drawings are missing. This in turn complicates our understanding of Constable’s working method.

This catalogue provides an opportunity to consider ten drawings by Constable. The sheets come from the collection of David Thomson, who has not only formed



Fig.1 · John Constable, *Self-portrait*, 1806

Pencil · 7½ × 5¾ inches · 190 × 145 mm

© Tate, London 2018 (T03899)

the greatest assemblage of Constable's work since the artist's death, but has been responsible for stimulating considerable research into his work, particularly as a draughtsman.³ The purpose of this short essay is not to attempt any reassessment of Constable's drawing practice but to place the ten sheets included in this catalogue in some kind of context.

FOUNDATIONS: THE MAKING OF A NATURAL PAINTER

The process of becoming an artist in the eighteenth century – either amateur or professional – was rooted in drawing and drawing dominated Constable's first steps as a painter. His earliest works are all on paper, from the careful copies he made after Dorigny's engravings of Raphael's tapestry cartoons to his tentative landscape studies made in and around East Bergholt.⁴ We can plot Constable's development through his voluminous correspondence, C.R. Leslie's biography and more recently the compendium of documents compiled by Beckett between 1962 and 1968 and augmented in 1976. Each provide a rich seam of evidence for Constable's influences and actions as an artist. Drawing in Suffolk in 1799, Constable wrote to J.T. Smith that: 'I fancy I see Gainsborough in every hedge and hollow tree'.⁵ Looking at Constable's early studies [fig.2] they show the impact of Gainsborough's tightly worked Suffolk landscape drawings. Before his departure for London Constable was still seeing his native Suffolk mediated through the lens of Gainsborough.

Constable entered the Royal Academy Schools as a Probationer in 1799. By this date the Academy had a highly structured syllabus based on drawing. Students were supposed to begin by drawing from the collection of casts in the Antique Academy before advancing to the living model. Constable's early supporter, the landscape painter, Joseph Farington, recorded his progress in detail.⁶ On 2 March 1799 Constable showed Farington a drawing he had made from the *Belvedere Torso*; two days later Constable was given a letter of introduction to Joseph Wilton, who was then Keeper of the Royal Academy Schools. The same day Constable wrote to his friend John Dunthorne: 'I am this morning admitted a student of the Royal Academy; the figure which I draw for admittance was the *Torso*'.⁷ On 4 December Farington listed Constable as among those Probationers who had qualified to be students at the Academy. Shortly afterwards, on 19 February 1800, Constable was enrolled in the Life Schools.

Constable entered the Academy when the institution was reaching maturity; a second generation of Academicians were conscious of investing British art with the intellectual and theoretical underpinning enjoyed by Continental schools of painting. This meant, above all, that the writings of the Academy's first President, Joshua Reynolds were highly valued and discussed. Constable was particularly conscious of Reynolds's writing and his reputation.⁸ It is from Reynolds that Constable borrowed the phrase 'the art of seeing nature' which he quotes in his



Fig.2 · John Constable, *A stand of elms*, c.1802

Pencil on laid paper · 19½ × 17½ inches · 495 × 444 mm
Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Dorothy Braude Edinburg to the
Harry B. and Bessie K. Braude Memorial Collection, 2013.914
(formerly with Lowell Libson Ltd)

letter to Maria Bicknell. It is a phrase which appears in Reynolds's writing in the 1780s most prominently in the *Twelfth Discourse*, which Reynolds delivered at the Academy in December 1784.⁹

The *Twelfth Discourse* was designed to offer advice to the student intent on travelling to Italy to continue their study. The first seven Discourses had appeared in print in 1778 and so Reynolds recaps the programme of study he had recommended:

*[t]he grammar, the rudiments however unpalatable, must at all events be mastered. After a habit is acquired of drawing correctly from the model (whatever it may be) which he has before him.*¹⁰

In Reynolds's syllabus, 'the grammar' of drawing was learnt by studying from the antique and living models in the Academy Schools. But he warned that the artist 'should not presume to think themselves qualified to invent, till they were acquainted with those stores of invention the world already possesses, and had by that means accumulated sufficient materials for the mind to work with.'¹¹ This meant supplementing the mechanical with the intellectual in the form of studying the works of earlier masters. On his arrival in London Constable dutifully went about copying old master paintings, collecting old master prints and even speculating on a landscape by Ruysdael in partnership with Ramsay Richard Reinagle, which he copied before the pair sold it for a profit.¹²

Constable had privileged access to the collection of old masters formed by Reynolds's friend and patron Sir George Beaumont and he duly copied several landscapes by Claude in Beaumont's collection.¹³ Close copying of celebrated old masters performed multiple functions for the young painter. At work in Beaumont's house in Grosvenor Square the fidelity of his copy acted as an advertisement of his skill to Beaumont's visitors. At the same time, as Constable himself admitted, that he found 'it necessary to fag at copying, some time yet, to acquire execution. The more facility of practice I get, the more pleasure I shall find in my art'.¹⁴ Yet this type of copying had been discouraged by Reynolds. In the *Second Discourse* Reynolds cautioned against close copying ('a delusive kind of industry'), instead suggesting that if an admired painting's 'excellence consists in its general effect, it would be proper to make slight sketches of the machinery and general management of the picture'.¹⁵ Whilst Constable would produce close copies throughout his career, he was also in the habit of producing 'slight sketches' in pencil of old master pictures that he admired or felt had some utility for his work.¹⁶

By 1802 Constable felt sufficiently confident to prepare a painting for the Academy exhibition, a work which elicited the advice from Farington 'to Study nature & particular art less'.¹⁷ This was precisely what Constable did, returning to Suffolk determined as he wrote to Dunthorne to occupy what he saw as a 'room' for a 'natural painter'.

'THE VALUE OF ORIGINAL STUDY'¹⁸

The famous letter to Dunthorne of May 1802 shows that Farington's criticism had sent Constable back to the text of Reynolds's *Twelfth Discourse*. In the letter Constable relates an anecdote Reynolds had told about François Boucher and his habit of painting without reference to any 'model', the term Reynolds used to indicate study or drawing. Constable informs Dunthorne 'Nature is the fountain's head, the source from whence all originality must spring – and should an artist continue his practice without referring to nature he must soon form a *manner*, & be reduced to the same deplorable situation as the French painter mentioned by Sir J. Reynolds, who told him that he had long ceased to look at nature for she only put him out.'¹⁹ It is notable that in Reynolds's text his surprise was in finding Boucher – who was known in Britain as a landscape painter – at work on a composition without any preparatory studies, or 'models', Reynolds's characterised his fault as relying on memory alone.

Reynolds was insistent to the students at the Academy: 'you are never to lose sight of nature; the instant you do, you are all abroad, at the mercy of every gust of fashion, without knowing or seeing the point to which you ought to steer.' Reynolds laid out the method the newly trained painter should follow to avoid falling into this trap:

*I would recommend to every Artist to look over his porto-folio, or pocket-book, in which he has treasured up all the happy inventions, all the extraordinary and expressive attitudes that he has met with in the course of his studies.*²⁰

Adding:

The art of seeing Nature, or in other words, the art of using Models, is in reality the great object, the point to which all our studies are directed.

This was of great interest to Constable and gives us a context for viewing his drawings. Constable developed a habit of spending his summers in Suffolk sketching and then returning to London to work the material he had gathered into exhibition pictures precisely as Reynolds had suggested. In a letter to Maria Bicknell, written from East Bergholt in April 1814, Constable described his practice of keeping a 'journal' or sketchbook for the purpose of 'picking up little scraps of trees – plants – ferns – distances &c'.²¹ It was these 'models' or 'scraps', *plein air* drawings made continually by Constable directly from nature, which he kept close at hand in his London studios that underwrote his greatest compositions.

Despite Constable's determination to become a landscape painter, there is evidence that Constable took Reynolds's advice more literally. Some years after he had begun to exhibit landscapes at the Academy, Constable remained an assiduous attendee at the life Academy. Farington noted in his diary, for example, on 16 November 1807 that 'Constable attends the Life Academy every evening'.²² The



present catalogue contains three double-sided sheets of life drawings from a sketchbook dating from 1808 (cat. nos.7–9). Constable may have been attracted by the greater naturalism of approach which had been encouraged by Fuseli, as Keeper and Professor of Painting at the RA. Fuseli allowed students after 1804 to adopt a much freer approach to drawing the model. He encouraged the young William Etty to paint directly from the figure in oil, a practice that we know Constable had adopted by 1808.²³ The Scottish painter David Wilkie recorded in his diary in July 1808: ‘went to the Royal Academy, where I found the living figure sitting and ... Constable, and others, painting from her.’²⁴

PICKING UP SCRAPS: DRAWING NATURE

As Ian Fleming-Williams first pointed out, Constable had periods when drawing dominated his art. ‘Drawing or painting appears to have taken the lead alternatively: painting out of doors in 1802 giving place to pencil and watercolour in 1805–6; oil sketching predominating in the period 1809–12, to yield during 1813 and 1814 yet again to the sketchbook and pencil. This period, and in particular those last two years, was largely devoted to sketching, to gathering the material that would fuel his creative energy for the rest of his working life.’²⁵ This catalogue contains sheets from all of these key moments offering us an opportunity to interrogate further how Constable used his drawings.



Fig.3 · John Constable, *Dedham Vale from East Bergholt*, 25 July

Pencil · 3¼ × 4¼ inches · 80 × 108 mm.

Intact sketchbook of 1813, p.12

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (317–1888)

Fig.4 · John Constable, *Three drawings on one page: an artist seated on a folding stool; the porch of East Bergholt Church and a thatched cottage*

Pencil · 3¼ × 4¼ inches · 80 × 108 mm.

Intact sketchbook of 1813, p.25

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (317–1888)

Fig.5 · John Constable, *A page of studies*

Pencil · 3¼ × 4¼ inches · 81 × 111 mm.

Intact sketchbook of 1813, p.32

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (317–1888)

In 1805–6 immediately after the foundation of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours Constable turned to the now fashionable medium of watercolour, producing a series of *plein air* landscapes around East Bergholt and on a tour of the Lake District. Constable was evidently interested in the ability of the medium to convey the general effects of light and weather on the landscapes he encountered. As has regularly been pointed out, Constable was probably reacting to Farington’s advice that he attend to general rather than particular nature. In the view of *East Bergholt Church from the South* (cat.no.1), Constable uses diffuse washes to suggest atmosphere rather than concentrating on the antiquarian detail of the architecture. As with all Constable’s *plein air* studies, his watercolours were directed at finished, exhibition works. A number of the Lake District watercolours are squared for enlargement and in 1808 Farington saw a Lake District scene five feet in width in Constable’s studio which he was planning to submit to the Academy.²⁶

Constable was in the habit of carrying a small Whatman sketchbook or ‘pocketbook’ measuring just 3½ × 4¾ inches, during his summers spent in Suffolk. Although he used them throughout his career, they assumed particular importance during the summers of 1813 and 1814. There appear to have been three originally, each pocket sized, and two have remained unbroken: the one he carried around with him in the summer of 1813 and one of two he used in

1814, both now in the V&A.²⁷ These two intact sketchbooks contain respectively ninety and eighty-four pages and the third dismembered sketchbook probably contained roughly the same number of pages, although only a dozen or so have been identified.²⁸

In 1814 Constable wrote to Maria about a trip he made to Essex to stay with a friend, the Revd. Walter Driffield at Feering: 'I have filled as usual a little book of hasty memorandums of the places which I saw which you will see.'²⁹ Constable seems to have spent his time out of doors walking and recording nature. In May 1814 he noted: 'I took several beautiful walks in search of food for my pencil this summer when I hope to do a great deal in Landscape.'³⁰ We get an idea of this 'food' by examining the contents of the intact sketchbook Constable used in the summer of 1813.³¹ With the exception of one drawing of a tomb at Widford, near Chelmsford, and a few views of Colchester, Constable used the 1813 sketchbook exclusively to record the environs of East Bergholt. Yet, this small sketchbook, contains a remarkable range of subjects – from sweeping Suffolk vistas to individual motifs, such as donkeys, cattle and even three posts on the bank of the river Stour – handled in diverse ways [figs 3 & 4]. Constable produced miniature compositions contained within drawn frames, some sheets being carefully compartmentalised so that he could present three distinct views on a single page. [fig.5] Nourishment these studies certainly were; the drawings he 'treasured up' in



Fig.6 · John Constable, *Hadleigh Castle*, 1814

Pencil · 3¼ × 4¾ inches · 83 × 108 mm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (234-1888)

the 1813 sketchbook reappear in many of Constable's greatest exhibition works.³²

Constable's last dated drawings in the 1814 V&A sketchbook depict the distinctive tower of St Mary's Church, Stoke-by-Nayland. From his correspondence, we know Constable was visiting his aunt, Martha Smith and he noted to Maria Bicknell: 'my way was chiefly through woods and nothing could exceed the beauty of the foliage.'³³ At least three pages from the sketchbook contain rapidly worked drawings showing the church from the South-East. Our drawing (cat.no.2) repeats the view and it almost certainly comes from a dismembered sketchbook of the same size that Constable used earlier in that summer. In this drawing Constable strengthened the distinctive outline of the church, and with rapid pencil lines described the buttresses and windows of the building. It was this distinctive profile which became a recurring motif in Constable's work towards the end of his career, appearing in a plate from the second part of *English Landscape* and also in a 'six-footer' which survives as a full-sized sketch.³⁴ In the same sketchbook, which he used on his trip to Feering, Constable made two slight studies of the ruined Hadleigh Castle [fig.6], complaining to Maria: 'My companion though more than seventy is a more active and restless creature and I could never get him to stop long at a place.'³⁵ Despite this complaint, Constable's only sight of Hadleigh and the two studies he had time to make were sufficient to produce his large, six-foot canvas *Hadleigh Castle* in 1829 [fig.7].



Fig.7 · John Constable, *Hadleigh Castle*, 1829

Oil on canvas · 48 × 64¾ inches · 1219 × 1937mm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (B.1977.14.42)

Whilst it seems extraordinary that Constable's miniature pocketbooks could yield motifs and monumental compositions that remained little altered in their transposition to his six-foot canvases, his studies also highlighted problems which only further drawing could solve. A page showing the porch of East Bergholt Church viewed from the South East, dated 17 September 1814, from the V&A sketchbook [fig.8] gives a sense of Constable's awareness of his limited understanding of the science of his art. This composition presented Constable with an optical problem, as he noted on a drawing of precisely the same view which he made with the use of a tracing glass now in Munich [fig.9], 'to try the problem (by the Glass) whether the side of any building standing square on the base of the picture does recede to the point of distance or not'.³⁶ Constable's purpose was to ascertain, using a device of his own creation, whether vertical lines, in this case those of the porch, perceptibly converged upwards towards a vanishing-point. His tracing glass was derived from an account in Leonardo da Vinci's *Treatise on Painting* which had appeared in a new English edition in 1721. We have an account of the somewhat cumbersome mechanics involved in using the glass by the miniaturist Arthur Parsey in his manual on perspective *The Science of Vision*.³⁷ Constable concluded that the vertical lines did converge towards a vanishing-point and he produced a corrected drawing (cat.no.3). Constable then used his tracing to produce a rare, highly finished drawing which he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1818 as *A Gothic Porch* [fig.10].



FOOD FOR MY PENCIL: CONSTABLE'S DRAWINGS IN ACTION

Anne Lyles, in writing about the gestation of Constable's exhibition works, has pointed out that 'sometimes a pencil study has an ambiguous relationship to a compositional study' underlining the fact that for Constable, drawing was not always the first stage in working towards a finished painting.³⁸ Drawings could, instead, act to help clarify an aspect of a composition during its evolution. Constable's drawings also point to the life of the artist beyond the finished exhibition work: to compositional experiments that never fructified into a painting or emerged in another format.

Constable's great sequence of exhibition works executed on canvases of six foot, that made them, to quote Leslie 'too large to remain unnoticed', emerged from a range of earlier sketches and studies. *Hadleigh Castle*, as has been noted, was based upon a small, schematic compositional study made fifteen years earlier. *Boat-Building at Flatford Mill* had a similarly precautionous origin, emerging directly from a diminutive drawing in the 1814 sketchbook.³⁹ But other of the six-footers, such as *The Leaping Horse* [fig.11], which was completed in 1825 had more complex inceptions and drew on a bewildering range of graphic material that Constable had 'treasured up' over his mature career. Constable called on a sketch of a pollarded willow he had made in about 1821, a page from the 1813 V&A sketchbook [fig. 12] showing three timbered posts that he included in the foreground of the



Fig.8 · John Constable, *East Bergholt Church*

Pencil · 3½ × 4¼ inches
81 × 111 mm
Dated: 17th September 1814
Intact sketchbook of 1814, p.82
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (1259-1888)

Fig.9 · John Constable, *East Bergholt Church*

Tracing · 9½ × 7½ inches
252 × 195 mm
Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München
(1922:3452Z)

Fig.10 · John Constable, *East Bergholt Church*

Pencil · 12½ 9¼ inches
318 × 235mm
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.
Gilbert Davis Collection
(59.55.260)



full-scale sketch and an oil sketch of a moorhen startled from its nest.⁴⁰ He also relied on paper to test the dynamic content of the composition in the form of two monochrome ink and wash drawings, both preserved in the British Museum [figs. 13 & 14]. These drawings show the horse standing and leaping and, as Anne Lyles has pointed out, the dynamism of the latter prompted Constable to reach for his brush and execute a small, intense oil sketch [fig. 15] which confirmed the design of the composition before embarking on the final painting and its sketch.⁴¹ Throughout the process individual elements restlessly appear and disappear; the three posts, for example, which are absent from the two drawings then appear in the small sketch as well as the six-foot sketch before being changed in the final painting. This composite approach underscores the value Constable placed on his drawings, however slight.

The primacy of painting in scholarship on Constable means that his drawings are frequently pressed into service merely as preparatory material for known works, but amongst Constable's drawings are designs which never made it to canvas. Working in a sketchbook in Suffolk during the summer of 1832 Constable made a drawing of *A Barge on the Stour* [fig.22].⁴² The view shows a figure – identified as a boy – dismounting from a grey tow-horse mid-stream, to the right of the composition is the familiar prow of a flat-bottomed Suffolk barge; an expansive landscape on the left is framed by a clump of trees on the right. The ambitious composition was handled rapidly in pencil, then pen and ink, before being strengthened with watercolour, shows a scene in full sympathy with those of Constable's other Stour six-footers.⁴³ The drawing in this catalogue (cat.no.6) has been identified by Reynolds as coming from the same sketchbook and clearly



OPPOSITE PAGE:

Fig.11 · John Constable,
The Leaping Horse, 1825

Oil on canvas, 1420 × 1873 mm
Royal Academy of Arts, London,
Given by Mrs Dawkins, 1889 03/1391
© Royal Academy of Arts, London

Fig.12 · John Constable,
*Study of three posts on the banks of the
River Stour*

Pencil · 3 3/8 × 4 1/4 inches · 81 × 111 mm.
Intact sketchbook of 1813, p.76
© Victoria and Albert Museum,
London, (317–1888)



THIS PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM:

Fig.13 · John Constable,
Study for 'The Leaping Horse', 1825

Pencil and pen and grey ink and wash
8 × 11 7/8 inches · 203 × 302 mm
© The Trustees of the British Museum

Fig.14 · John Constable,
Study for 'The Leaping Horse', 1825

Pencil and pen and grey ink and wash
8 × 11 7/8 inches · 203 × 302 mm
© The Trustees of the British Museum



Fig.15 · John Constable,
Study for The Leaping Horse, c.1824–5

Oil on canvas · 8 3/8 × 10 5/8 inches ·
212 × 270 mm
Private collection, USA (formerly with
Lowell Libson Ltd)

shows Constable developing the composition. Similarly begun in pencil and built up in pen the drawing shows the horse on the bank and orientated to the right, the figure of the boy exiting the river and the figures in the barge seated. Fleming-Williams identified Constable's next exploration of this composition in sepia wash drawing [fig.23] of the same year which has the appearance of a blot in the manner of Alexander Cozens. Constable re-orientates the composition to make an upright landscape with barge, figure apparently climbing ashore and framing clump of trees. Constable seems not to have taken the composition further. Each of these drawings shows Constable experimenting with classic devices: Stour, barge, horse, young rider; but in each he exploits the characteristics of the different media to convert a summer landscape rendered in watercolour to a brooding ink blot.

An underappreciated element of Constable's work is his fascination with the potential of other media. Constable's relationship with prints beyond *English Landscape* has not received wide attention.⁴⁴ Constable, we know, was taught to etch by his early correspondent and mentor, J.T. Smith and Constable made a handful of etchings throughout his career.⁴⁵ In the summer of 1820 Constable, accompanied by Maria and their two small children, spent almost six weeks staying with the Fishers in Salisbury. It was during this trip that he explored the environs of the city and made his only excursion to see Stonehenge. Using a medium sized sketchbook Constable recorded his walks with Fisher. On 13th July, shortly after his arrival, Constable and Fisher left Salisbury through St Anne's Gate towards the east of the city and walked to the hamlet of Milford where Constable made a rapid study of a fallen willow stump by the side of the River Bourne with a group of Constable then drew the view from Milford Bridge looking back towards Salisbury with the cathedral spire silhouetted on the horizon (cat.no.5). Constable returned to this drawing twice, once in about 1826 to produce a vivid etching and again in 1836 as a watercolour to be engraved by A. R. Freebairn for a head-piece to illustrate Thomas Wharton's *An Ode to Summer* in an anthology of verse.⁴⁶

This rare print [fig.21] has always been dated to 1826, on the basis of an apparently inscribed impression, and this was a moment when Constable was deeply interested in printmaking. Constable had been commissioned to produce a set of drawings of boats for a series of prints by the Anglo-French dealer John Arrowsmith in 1824 and at the same date Constable allowed S.W. Reynolds to produce an engraving of *The Lock*.⁴⁷ Constable's etching also shows his continued engagement with old master print techniques, particularly the landscape etchings of Claude, of which he owned a fine collection.⁴⁸ Constable's decision to turn our drawing into an etching is particularly revealing. The rapidly executed drawing is made up of incisive marks with limited areas of regular shading, as such it lent itself to being reproduced as an etching: the bur thrown up by the etching needle simulates the drawing technique. Constable's fascination with graphic art deepened in the

1830s and several of the plates of *English Landscape* were based, not on exhibition works or oil sketches, but drawings or watercolours.⁴⁹ The process of producing the mezzotints was, in many ways, a form of collaborative drawing with Lucas submitting proofs to Constable, who then obsessively altered and refined the printed images with touches of grey and white wash.⁵⁰

For Constable drawing was as essential to his art as painting and a fundamental way of capturing the effects of the world around him. His sketches were a vital resource where he 'treasured up' ideas which sustained his exhibition oils. More than this, drawing was part of his daily routine, a way to solve the mechanical problems of his art and a medium for innovation.

JONNY YARKER



Fig.16 · John Constable, *Milford bridge*, c.1836

Watercolour · 7⅞ × 9½ inches · 182 × 241mm

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (341-1888)



Ten Drawings by John Constable
Catalogue

1. East Bergholt Church: From the South

Drawn in 1806
Pencil and watercolour
7 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches · 180 × 160 mm

COLLECTIONS

Charles Bostock;
Bostock sale, Sotheby's 26th June 1946 lot 71;
R. J. Marnham;
Leggatt, by 1948;
Dr H.A.C. Gregory;
Sotheby's, 6th June 2007, lot 222.



Fig.17 · John Constable, *East Bergholt Church*, 1805
Pencil and watercolour
17 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches · 439 × 351mm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (5817)

This sensitive watercolour was made in 1806 at a moment when Constable was particularly interested in the medium; this unpublished sheet forms part of a sequence of watercolour studies he was making of East Bergholt church at this date.¹ Constable had been commissioned to produce a design for the frontispiece of: *A Select collection of Epitaphs and monumental inscriptions*. The result was a drawing of East Bergholt churchyard with three figures contemplating a tombstone inscribed with the concluding lines of Thomas Gray's *Elegy*. As has been pointed out, Constable's time spent drawing in the churchyard in the Summer of 1806 may reflect the presence at the rectory of Maria Bicknell, granddaughter of the incumbent, Dr Rhudde and Constable's future wife.²

In the present watercolour Constable shows the porch and south wall of the church, with the foot of the unfinished west tower on the left of the composition. Constable's watercolour is quite different in spirit and conception to the watercolour views he had made of the church the previous summer. In 1805 Constable produced several topographical studies of the church, reveling in the architectural minutiae of the structure, in 1806 his watercolours become noticeably less precise and more concerned with the effects of light and shade. In the present sheet Constable explores the various planes of the wall, producing a careful profile of the complex architecture and then washing it with diffuse lights and shadows. This example of Constable's handling of watercolour is a rare and important addition to our understanding of his engagement with the medium at a highly important moment.



2. Stoke-by-Nayland Church From the South-East

Drawn in 1814
Pencil
3 1/8 x 4 1/8 inches · 80 x 105 mm

COLLECTIONS

Isabel Constable, daughter of the artist;
Isabel Constable sale, Christie's 17th June 1892,
lot 144 (part lot);
Leggatt Brothers, London, September 1943;
Denis Pepys-Whiteley;
Sotheby's, 14th March 1962, lot 5 (part lot);
Dr J Katz;
Bonham's, 2nd November 2002, lot 49.

LITERATURE

Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1996, cat. no.14.63, repr. pl.1216.

This small, boldly worked drawing almost certainly comes from a dismembered pocket-sketchbook Constable was using during the Summer of 1814. The sheet shows the distinctive profile of St Mary's Church, Stoke-by-Nayland, seen from the South-East. Stoke-by-Nayland was a village situated across Dedham Vale from East Bergholt, Constable's aunt, Martha Smith, lived in the village and Constable regularly visited sketching. In 1814 he wrote to Maria Bicknell of walking to Stoke: 'my way was chiefly through woods and nothing could exceed the beauty of the foliage.'¹ The distinctive profile of the church, its west tower and bulky nave appear in a number of drawings and paintings by Constable. He made at least seven



Fig.18 · John Constable, *Stoke-by-Nayland*, c.1830
Oil on paper · 9 3/4 x 13 inches · 248 x 330mm
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (150-1888)



Cat.no.2 verso



studies in the 1814 V&A sketchbook of the church and its setting.

The present drawing does not replicate any of his earlier studies, showing the church from the South-East close-to, cutting out a cottage that generally appears in the right foreground. Constable was at that moment struggling with certain elements of perspective in the recording structures, specifically the fact that parallel lines converge towards a vanishing point. In 1814 he made a drawing of Stoke-by-Nayland church using a tracing glass of his own invention to

test this rule.² This suggests that Constable was considering producing a more finished view of the church, although it was not until towards the end of his career that it appears in a plate from the second part of *English Landscape* and in a six-footer which only survives in its full-sized sketch.³ This beautifully preserved drawing was in the collection of Constable's daughter, Isobel, suggesting that it formed part of Constable's studio throughout his lifetime. On the verso Constable has tried out various hatched lines, evidently experimenting with a new pencil.

3. East Bergholt Church: the porch

Drawn in 1814

Pencil

4 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches · 124 × 92 mm

COLLECTIONS

Richard Gubbins, a cousin of the artist, d 1836;

Major W.J.M. Gubbins, by descent;

Gubbins sale, Christie's, 20th June 1978, lot 125;

With Spink;

Stanhope Shelton, 1984.

LITERATURE

Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1996, cat. no.14.60, repr. pl.1208.



Fig.19 · John Constable, *East Bergholt Church from the South East*, c.1814

Pencil · 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches · 123 × 94mm

© Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge (899.2)

This bold drawing of the porch of East Bergholt Church was worked up from a page in Constable's 1814 sketchbook.¹ This drawing in turn, formed the basis for a copy in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge and a large exhibition drawing in the Huntington Library, San Marino.² The porch of East Bergholt Church was to be a recurring motif in Constable's art, in 1810 he exhibited a painting of the porch at the Royal Academy with the title *A church-yard* and again in 1818 the large finished drawing in the Huntington with the title *A Gothic Porch*. Our drawing seems to show Constable grappling with a problem of perspective, namely the fact that parallel lines converge towards a vanishing point. Constable produced a drawing of precisely the same view using a tracing glass of his own devising.³

Constable used unusually regular hatching throughout the sheet, describing the background with a series of parallel lines. He may have been considering an engraving of this subject. Another drawing of the same date showing the spire of *Stoke-by-Nayland Church*, similarly developed from a page of the 1814 sketchbook, is executed in an almost identical manner on a sheet of the same size. That drawing, now in Sydney at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, also contains regular, parallel lines and strengthened outline.⁴ These two drawings show the ways in which Constable returned to his sketchbooks to develop compositions.



4. The tower of St Michael's Church, Framlingham

Drawn in 1815

Pencil

4½ × 2¾ inches · 114 × 54 mm

COLLECTIONS

John Postle Heseltine (L.1508);

J.A. White;

Sir Robert Witt (L.2228b);

Christies, 22 March 2006, lot 1431;

Christie's, 5 July 2011, lot.141.

EXHIBITED

London, The National Trust, 39 Grosvenor Square,

W1, *Exhibition of British Country Life*, 1937, cat.no.32

(lent by Sir Robert Witt);

Oxford, Oxford Arts Club, *Richard Wilson and John*

Constable, Exhibition no.148, with an introduction by

Victor Rienacker, cat.no. 8 (ent by Sir Robert Witt);

London, Stafford Gallery, Duke Street, 1939.



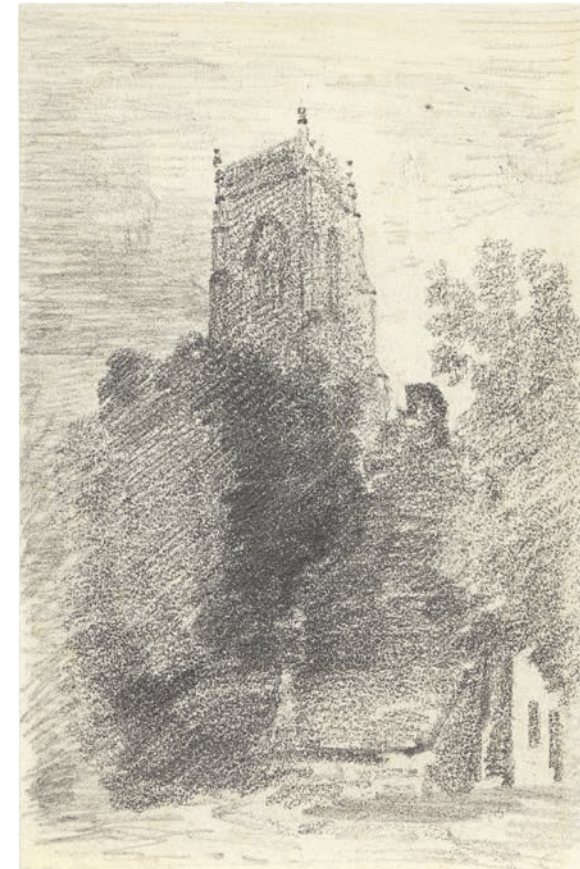
Fig.20 · John Constable, *Framlingham Castle from the South West*, 1815

Pencil · 5¼ × 4½ inches · 134 × 114mm

© Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge (899.1)

This drawing comes from a sketchbook Constable was using in August 1815 when he visited the Suffolk town of Framlingham. The latter was of topographical and antiquarian interest to the artist as headquarters of Mary Queen of Scots during the attempted insurrection against Queen Elizabeth. During the particularly fine summer and autumn of 1815 Constable travelled about East Anglia a good deal and spent much time sketching in the open. He wrote to Maria Bicknell on 27 August 1815: 'I love almost wholly in the fields and see nobody but the harvest men. The weather has been uncommonly fine though we have had some very high winds that have disordered the foliage a great deal.'¹ Constable made at least three further drawings of Framlingham, specifically studies of the castle; two are at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge and one is the Royal Institution of Cornwall, Truro.²

This small, rapidly handled study shows the tower of the church of St. Michael's, Framlingham from the south. The study is executed in Constable's characteristic confident, rapid hatching and is similar in approach to numerous sketches he was making in Suffolk during the summer of 1815.³ Despite its diminutive scale – the drawing measures just over 2 inches in width – Constable has carefully recorded the profile of the church tower and provided a tonal study of the surrounding vegetation. This drawing was owned by both John Postle Heseltine and Robert Witt, who formed important collections of British drawings.



5. Milford Bridge with a distant view of Salisbury Cathedral

Drawn in 1820
Pencil · 4½ × 7¼ inches · 115 × 185 mm

COLLECTIONS

John Constable;
Lt-Col. J.H.Constable, by descent;
Richard Constable, by descent, to 2001.

LITERATURE

Freda Constable, *John Constable 1776-1837: A Biography*, 1975, repr. p.142;
Leslie Parris, Ian Fleming-Williams and Conal Shields, *Constable: Paintings, Watercolours & Drawings*, Tate Gallery catalogue, 1976, p.181 (see catalogue numbers 332 and 333);
Selby Whittingham, *Constable and Turner at Salisbury*, 2nd revised edition 1976 p.50;
Graham Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1984, cat. no.20.59, repr. pl.179.

This important drawing was made by Constable on a visit to Salisbury in 1820, Constable revisited the sheet twice, first in 1826 as the model for one of his rare etchings and again in 1836 as the basis for an engraving. In the summer of 1820

Constable, accompanied by his wife, Maria and their two small children, spent almost six weeks staying with the Fishers in Salisbury. It was during this trip that he explored the environs of the city and made his only excursion to see Stonehenge. Using a medium sized sketchbook Constable recorded his walks with Fisher; on 13th July, shortly after his arrival, Constable and Fisher left Salisbury through St Anne's Gate towards the east of the city and walked to the hamlet of Milford. Constable made a rapid study of a fallen willow stump by the side of the River Bourne with a group of farm buildings in the distance next to the distinctive triple arch of Milford Bridge. Constable then made this drawing, showing the view from Milford Bridge looking back towards Salisbury with the cathedral spire silhouetted on the horizon. The drawing, which was executed rapidly in pencil is an unusually complete composition; the serpentine road acting as an obvious repoussoir anchors the foreground, whilst the presence of the figure on the bridge gives an indication of narrative usually absent from Constable's



sketchbook studies. This may explain why Constable returned to the composition later in his career.

The rare etching Constable made after this drawing has always been dated to 1826 on the bases of an apparently inscribed impression.¹ The etching was certainly finished by 1833 when Constable gave an impression, along with an impression of Constable's etching of Netley Abbey, to the great patron and collector John Sheepshanks.² This impression is inscribed: 'Etched by John Constable and present by him to John Sheepshanks, Esq - March 4, 1833. 1st state before roulette work.'³ No second state is recorded. Constable had been taught to etch early in his career by the engraver John Thomas Smith. Constable's decision to turn the drawing

into an etching is particularly revealing. The rapidly executed study is made up of incisive marks with limited areas of regular shading, as such it lent itself to being reproduced as an etching: the bur thrown up by the etching needle simulates the drawing technique. Constable returned to this drawing in 1836 making a watercolour copy which in turn was used as the basis for an engraving by A.R. Freebairn which was used as the headpiece to an extract from Thomas Wharton's 'An Ode to Summer' published in the second volume of *The Book of Gems: The Poets and Artists of Great Britain* edited by S. C. Hall.⁴ The drawing evidently remained accessible in Constable's studio, it remained with the Constable family until 2001 and had not previously been on the market.



Fig.21 · John Constable,
Milford Bridge, c.1826

Etching · 5¼ × 7½ inches · 133 × 190 mm
© The Trustees of the British Museum
(1896.0821.19)

6. On the Stour

Drawn c.1832
Pencil, pen and brown wash
on wove paper watermarked: [WHA]TMAN / [18]31
4½ × 7¾ inches · 114 × 187 mm

COLLECTIONS

Mary Chrisina Hornby, (formerly in the 'Hornby Album');
Mrs Hugh Vaux, by descent;
Lawrence Fine Art of Crewkerne, 19 April 1979, lot.14;
Leggatt Brothers.

LITERATURE

Graham Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1984, cat. no.32.35, repr. pl.845; pp.234–235;
Ian Fleming-Williams, et al., *Constable: a Master Draughtsman*, exhibition catalogue, London, 1994, pp.234–235.

EXHIBITED

London, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario & New York, Frick Collection,
Constable: a Master Draughtsman, 1994–5, no.74

This impressive and important compositional study comes from a Whatman sketchbook Constable was using in 1832, it shows an idea for an unexecuted painting of a barge on the River Stour. Reynolds convincingly suggested that this drawing demonstrates Constable developing an idea that he had worked out in watercolour on another page of the same sketchbook. In this earlier study, Constable shows a figure – identified as a boy – dismounting from a grey tow-horse mid-stream, to the right of the composition is the familiar prow of a flat-bottomed Suffolk



Fig.22 · John Constable, *A barge on the Stour*, c.1832

Pencil, pen and ink and watercolour · 4½ × 7½ inches · 115 × 192mm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (237–1888)



barge being navigated by a standing figure; an expansive landscape on the left is framed by a clump of trees on the right. Begun in pencil and built up in pen the present sheet shows the horse on the bank and facing right, the figure of the boy exiting the river and the figures in the barge seated. Fleming-Williams identified Constable's next exploration of this subject as a sepia wash drawing of the same year now in the V&A. Here Constable re-orientates the composition to make an upright landscape with barge, figure apparently climbing ashore and framing clump of trees. Constable seems not to have taken the composition further.

The subject-matter is suggestive. Constable's first six-footer, *The White Horse* of 1819, depicted a barge being maneuvered across the Stour from one towpath to the other, with a grey tow-horse standing in the bows. This drawing may well represent an idea for a grand exhibition painting which was never completed. The drawing was one of a group assembled in an album in the late nineteenth century for Mary Christina Hornby, wife of a wealthy Liverpool merchant.



Fig.23 · John Constable, *Trees and a stretch of water on the Stour*, c.1832

Pencil and brown wash · 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches · 205 × 162mm
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (250-1888)

7. A female nude lying down (*recto*), 1808
A female nude standing, seen from the back (*verso*)

Pencil
4½ × 6¼ inches · 115 × 158 mm
Inscribed in pencil by the artist '1808'

COLLECTIONS

John Constable;
Hugh Constable, (grandson of the painter), by descent;
Leggatt Bros., acquired from the above;
W. A. Briscoe, Longstowe Hall, Cambridgeshire, acquired from the above, 1860–1934;
Richard G. Briscoe, Longstowe Hall, 1893–1957;
Michael Bevan, Longstowe Hall, by descent from the above, to 1992;
And by descent, to 2001.

LITERATURE

Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1996, cat.no.08.21, repr. pl.702 (*verso*: cat.no.08.22, pl.703)

EXHIBITED

London, Leggatt's Gallery (77 Cornhill, London), *Pictures and water-colour drawings by John Constable RA*, 1899

These rapidly drawn life studies were made on a page from a sketchbook Constable seems to have been using in 1808. Constable first entered the Life Schools of the Royal Academy on 19 February 1800, he continued to attend regularly. Constable's friend and mentour, the landscape painter Joseph Farington recorded a visit from Constable noting that: 'He attends the Life Academy every evening.'¹ Farington records an illustrative precis of Constable's conversation regarding his time at the Life Academy:

Rigaud is the present Visitor at the Life Academy & is one of the best Visitors that the Academy affords & sets very good figures. Tresham who was the last Visitor,



Cat.no.7 verso



said that He never saw so many good drawings in the Academy at one time before. Mulready a man Twenty one or two years of age is reckoned to draw the best, but sets Himself high upon it as if He had done His business. He was a pupil of Varley & married His sister. Hilton, another student draw very well. He is abt. 25 or 6 years old.

Constable seems to have made these two studies rapidly on a small sketchbook, perhaps trying

out a pose before moving to a larger format. We know that he was also producing large-scale finished drawings in the Life Academy and, more unusually, painted studies at this date. The two drawings show a female model lying and standing. Female life models were a peculiarity of the British academy system. Constable suggests the figure with a series of subtle hatched lines, avoiding outline, a method which was particularly noted by contemporaries.

8. A male nude lying down, seen from the back (*recto*)
A male nude standing with his right arm raised (*verso*), 1808

Pencil on paper with the cut watermark of Britannia
in a cartouche
4 × 6¼ inches · 103 × 158 mm

COLLECTIONS

John Constable;
Hugh Constable, (grandson of the painter),
by descent;
Leggatt Bros., acquired from the above;
W. A. Briscoe, Longstowe Hall, Cambridgeshire,
acquired from the above, 1860–1934;
Richard G. Briscoe, Longstowe Hall, 1893–1957;
Michael Bevan, Longstowe Hall,
by descent from the above, to 1992;
And by descent, to 2001.

LITERATURE

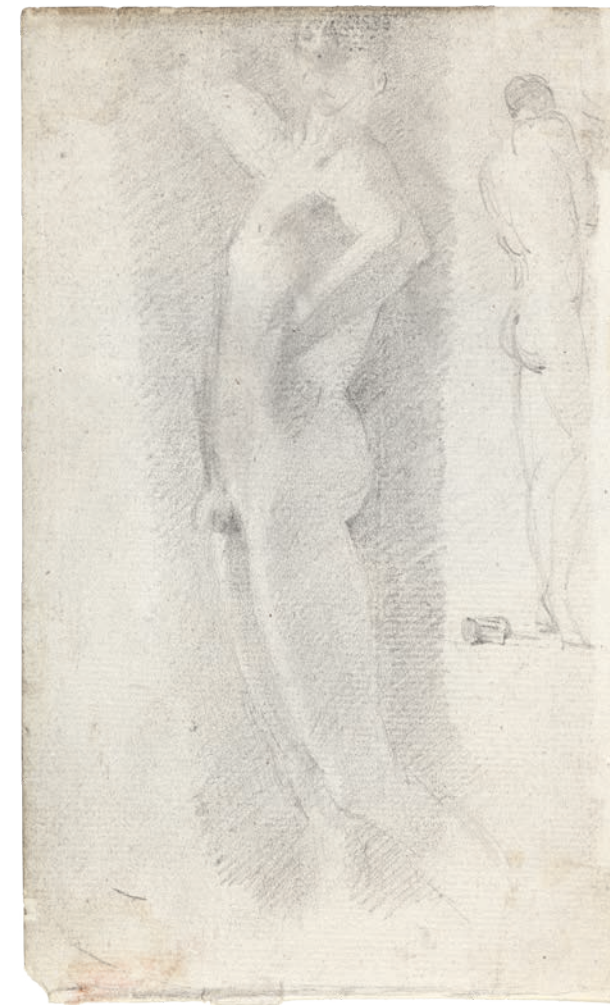
Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings
of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1996, cat.
no.08.23, repr. pl.704 (verso: cat.no.08.20, pl.699)

EXHIBITED

London, Leggatt's Gallery (77 Cornhill, London),
Pictures and water-colour drawings by John Constable RA,
1899

These finely rendered figure studies were made on a page of a sketchbook Constable was using in 1808. Several contemporary accounts record Constable at work in the Life Academy of the Royal Academy at that date, including Constable's friend, the Scottish painter David Wilkie. Wilkie noted in July 1808: 'went to the Royal Academy, where I found the living figure sitting and... Constable, and others, painting from her.'¹ Whilst Constable produced oil studies and large finished drawings, he also executed a number of small pencil studies. Leslie noted that: 'I have seen no studies made by Constable at the Academy from the antique, but many chalk drawings and oil paintings from the living model, all of which have great breadth of light and shade, though they are sometimes defective in outline.'² In both the drawings on this sheet, Constable all but eliminates outline, modelling the figures in light and shade. On the *recto*, the sensitively drawn reclining nude is described entirely in terms of light; Constable projects the figure by building up the background in a mass of hatched lines. On the *verso*, the standing figure is similarly described tonally; the articulation of the model's left arm is drawn with a mass of hatching.

The drawing on the *verso* shows Constable experimenting with the angle at which he wanted to draw the figure, showing the model from the side and viewed from behind. From what Constable informed Farington, the Visitor, John Francis Rigaud, was exceptional at setting the figure. Constable also explained that of the young students who frequented the Life Academy, William Mulready was 'reckoned to draw the best.'³ An impressive pencil drawing by Mulready dated to November 1805 shows the model set in almost precisely the same pose as the *recto* of the present sketch allowing a direct comparison of the two artists' technique and approach.⁴



9. A male nude seated and facing right (*recto*)

A male nude standing with his right arm raised (*verso*), 1808

Pencil on paper with the cut watermark of Britannia in a cartouche
4 × 6¼ inches · 103 × 158 mm

COLLECTIONS

John Constable;
Hugh Constable, (grandson of the painter),
by descent;
Leggatt Bros., acquired from the above;
W. A. Briscoe, Longstowe Hall, Cambridgeshire,
acquired from the above, 1860–1934;
Richard G. Briscoe, Longstowe Hall, 1893–1957;
Michael Bevan, Longstowe Hall,
by descent from the above, to 1992;
And by descent, to 2001.

LITERATURE

Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1996,
cat.no.08.19, repr. pl.701 (verso: cat.no.08.24, pl.700)

EXHIBITED

London, Leggatt's Gallery (77 Cornhill, London),
Pictures and water-colour drawings by John Constable RA,
1899

This sensitive study shows a recumbent male nude reclining on the *recto* and the outline of a standing figure on the *verso*. This page seems likely to have come from a sketchbook Constable was using in 1808 when he was recorded drawing in the Life Academy at the Royal Academy. The rapid sketches were probably made whilst Constable was establishing the view of each pose he wanted to take. We know that in 1808 he was also making studies from the life in oil and larger finished drawings. Although Constable was already an established landscape painter, who had exhibited a number of landscapes in the annual Royal Academy exhibiton, he was conscious of the importance of drawing from the living model. Joshua Reynolds, writing in the *Twelfth Discourse*, had stressed the necessity of the young artist returning to the living model when preparing a painting.¹ Constable certainly retained the studies he made at the Academy in 1808 using them in compositions he made much later in his career.²



10. A standing female nude

Drawn c.1810
Pencil
4 × 6½ inches · 102 × 155 mm

PROVENANCE

Mrs Ridley-Colbourne, 1826, from an album of Constable drawings;
And by descent to, sale Sotheby's, 15th November 1971, lot 50 (part lot);
William Darby, 1972;
Bonhams, London, 22 April 2010, lot 84.

LITERATURE

Graham Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1984, cat. no.20.66, repr. pl.187.

EXHIBITED

London, William Darby, *Exhibition of Drawings by John Constable RA*, 1972, no.37.

This loosely handled, intimate drawing shows a standing female model seen from behind. Dated by Reynolds to 1820, it seems likely to have been made much earlier and is stylistically close to a number of drawings Constable made in 1808. It is particularly close to a drawing by Constable drawn in 1808 of what appears to be the same model, similarly seen from behind and still in the collection of the Constable family.¹ Female models occupied an uncertain position in London at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Whilst male models were frequently chosen for their musculature, often being pugilists or soldiers and as such could emulate antiquities, female models were frequently prostitutes and far from the admired examples of classical sculpture. Constable's friend and mentor, J.T. Smith, recalled how a woman named Mrs Lobb, who ran a brothel in Dyot Street, supplied the sculptor Joseph Nollekens with models.² James Northcote described the woman who sat to Joshua Reynolds for his painting *Cimon and Iphegenia*, now in the Royal Collection, as a 'battered courtesan', noting how those female models who also worked as prostitutes: 'looked upon it [modelling] as an additional disgrace to what their profession imposed upon them, and as something unnatural, one even wearing a mask.'³ In this drawing the model has retained her modish hairstyle signaling her status as a contemporary nude, rather than imitate antiquity. This in turn gives the drawing an eroticism usually absent from academic studies. At this date Constable produced a number of intimate drawings of young women he knew, frequently seen from behind, but here the model's status and nudity gives the drawing an unusual charge.



Notes and References

Pages 7–21

1. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol.II, vol.II, p.81.
2. Ian Fleming - Williams and David Thomson, *Constable and his Drawings*, London, 1990, p.21.
3. Aspects of the Thomson collection of Constable drawings were explored in Ian Fleming - Williams and David Thomson, *Constable and his Drawings*, London, 1990 and Ian Fleming - Williams, *Constable, a Master Draughtsman*, exh.cat., London (Dulwich Picture Gallery), 1994.
4. For Constable's early drawings see: Ian Fleming - Williams and David Thomson, *Constable and his Drawings*, London, 1990, pp.32–47.
5. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol.II, p.16.
6. For an account of Constable's progress through the Royal Academy Schools see Ilaria Bignamini and Martin Postle, *The Artist's Model: Its Role in British Art from Lely to Etty*, Exh. Cat. Nottingham and London (University Art Gallery, Nottingham and The Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood), 1991, cat.no.26, p.56.
7. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol.II, p.22.
8. In September 1796 the painter John Cranch supplied Constable with a list of 'Painter's Reading, and hint or two respecting study' which included Reynolds's *Discourses*. See Eds. Lesley Parris, Conal Shields and Ian Fleming - Williams, *John Constable, Further Documents and Correspondence*, Ipswich, 1975, pp.27–38 and 199–201.
9. Reynolds's used the phrase again the following year in his notes to Alphonse Dufresnoy's 559-line Latin poem *De Arte Graphica* published by William Mason in 1783. See William Mason, *The Art of Painting of Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy, Translated into English Verse... with Annotations by Sir Joshua Reynolds*, London, 1783, p.140.
10. Ed. Robert Wark, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: Discourses on Art*, London and New Haven, 1975, p.209.
11. Ed. Robert Wark, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: Discourses on Art*, London and New Haven, 1975, p.208.
12. Constable wrote to Dunthorne: 'I have copied a small landscape of A. Caracci, and two Wilsons, and have done some little things of my own. I have likewise begun to copy a very fine picture by Ruysdael, which Mr Reinagle and myself have purchased in partnership for £70.' Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol.II, p.24.
13. For Constable's copying of old masters see Mark Evans, *John Constable: The Making of a Master*, London, 2015, pp.107–129.
14. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol.II, p.24.
15. Ed. Robert Wark, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: Discourses on Art*, London and New Haven, 1975, p.30.
16. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: The Fishers*, Ipswich, 1968, VI, p.142.
17. Ed. Kenneth Garkick and Angus Macintyre, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, New Haven and London, 1979, vol.V, p.1764.
18. Constable wrote to Maria Bicknell on May 4, 1814: 'I long much to see the pictures in Pall Mall. I only hope the labours of those great men Wilson and Gainsborough will open the eyes of the world to appreciate the value of original study.' Ed. R. B. Beckett, 1964, vol.II, p.122.
19. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol.II, p.32.
20. Ed. Robert Wark, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: Discourses on Art*, London and New Haven, 1975, p.214.
21. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol.II, p.120.
22. This was Constable's own testament, but given the number of life drawings that survive, is likely to be accurate. Constable regularly acted as Farington's source for gossip about younger members of the Academy. Ed. Kathryn Cave, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, New Haven and London, 1982, vol.viii, p.3142.
23. At least five painted academic nudes made by Constable in 1808 survive. See Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat. no's: 08.34, 08.30, 08.31, 08.33, 08.35.
24. Wilkie adopted an unusually empirical approach to life drawing. Benjamin Robert Haydon recalled visiting Wilkie in his rooms in Lower Phillimore Street: 'I went to his room rather earlier than the hour named, and to my utter astonishment found Wilkie sitting stark - naked on the side of his bed, drawing himself by the help of a looking glass! 'My God Wilkie' said I, 'where are we to breakfast?' Without any apology or attention to my important question, he replied: 'It's jest capital practice [sic]'. Ed. Michael Elwin, *The Autobiography and Journals of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, London, 1950, p.36. Wilkie records Constable 'stood for his portrait' in 1808, Wilkie used Constable as the model for the physician in a painting *The Sick Lady*.
25. Ian Fleming - Williams and David Thomson, *Constable and his Drawings*, London, 1990, p.10.
26. John Gage, 'Constable: The Big Picture', pp.20–21.
27. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat. no's: 13.17 and 14.32.
28. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat. nos 14.
29. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol. II, p.127.
30. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol. II, p.121.
31. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat. no: 13.17.
32. As Fleming - Williams observed of this period: 'from his months in Suffolk he returned with... with material contained in his sketchbooks that he was subsequently to use in the making of some of his greatest pictures.' Ian Fleming - Williams and David Thomson, *Constable and his Drawings*, London, 1990, pp.108–109.
33. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol. II, p.134.
34. For a discussion of the composition see: Leslie Parris and Ian Fleming - Williams, *Constable*, exh.cat., London (Tate), 1991, cat.no.218, pp.380–381.
35. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol. II, p.127.
36. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat. no: 14.59.
37. Parsey recorded that 'the late Mr Constable' told him: 'that he might not introduce too much foreground, and that he might sketch the view correctly, he had attached to the upper part of his easel a frame with a pane of glass in it; this frame was attached by two screw nuts by the two upper corners; to the four corners he attached four strings, which he brought to his mouth in such a manner as to bring the centre of the glass perpendicular to his eye.' For a discussion of Constable's use of tracing glass see Ian Fleming - Williams and David Thomson, *Constable and his Drawings*, London, 1990, pp.118–127.
38. Anne Lyles, 'Nature of Art? Constable's Sketches and Studies', in Ed. Jay A. Clarke, *Landscape, Innovation and Nostalgia: The Manton Collection of British Art*, New Haven and London, 2012, p.153. The existence of the Parsey material was first drawn to the attention of Constable scholars in discussion following a lecture by Michael Kitson at the Royal Society of Arts in 1976: the speaker was Conal Shields.
39. Leslie Parris and Ian Fleming - Williams, *Constable*, exh.cat., London (Tate), 1991, cat.no.72, pp.153–155.
40. See Susan Owens, 'Methods: I imagine myself driving a nail', in Mark Evans, *John Constable: The Making of a Master*, London, 2015, pp.134–135.
41. Anne Lyles in *Lowell Libson Ltd. Recent Acquisitions*, London, 2013, pp.100–103.
42. Reynolds, 32.33.
43. Ian Fleming - Williams, *Constable, a Master Draughtsman*, exh.cat., London (Dulwich Picture Gallery), 1994, exh.cat. 74, pp.234–235.
44. See Craig Hartley, 'Constable and his Prints', in *Print Quarterly*, 1993, vol.X, no.3, pp.290–294.
45. Ian Fleming - Williams and David Thomson, *Constable and his Drawings*, London, 1990, pp.35–47.
46. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat. no.36.17.
47. Constable's relationship with print makers has been comparatively under explored by scholars. For Reynolds's print of *The Lock* see Stephen Calloway, 'Canon: The Chiar'Oscuro of Nature' in Mark Evans, *John Constable: The Making of a Master*, London, 2015, pp.185–7.

48. Mark Evans, *John Constable: The Making of a Master*, London, 2015, pp.88–90.
49. Andrew Wilton, *Constable's 'English Landscape Scenery'*, London, 1979, p.11.
50. Without the facility to work the plate himself Constable complained to Lucas: 'how I wish I could scratch and tear away at it with your tools of steel.' See Ian Fleming - Williams and David Thomson, *Constable and his Drawings*, London, 1990, pp.232–251.

Cat.no.1

1. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 06.5, 06.6, 06.7.
2. Ian Fleming - Williams, *Constable and his Drawings*, London, 1990, pp.66–69.

Cat.no.2

1. Ed. R. B. Beckett, *John Constable's Correspondence: Early Friends and Maria Bicknell (Mrs Constable)*, Ipswich, 1964, vol. II, p.134.
2. For Constable's use of a tracing glass see: Ian Fleming - Williams, *Constable and his Drawings*, London, 1990, pp.118–121.
3. For a discussion of the composition see: Leslie Parris and Ian Fleming - Williams, *Constable*, exh. cat., London (Tate), 1991, cat.no.218, pp.380–381.

Cat.no.3

1. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat.no., 14.32, p.82.
2. Graham Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1984, cat.no.17.31.
3. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat.no.14.59.
4. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat.no.14.64.

Cat.no.4

1. Ed. R.B. Beckett, *Constable and his Drawings*, London, 1990, vol.II, p.149.
2. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat.nos 15.17, 15.19 and 15.20.
3. See for example Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat.no.15.11.

Cat.no.5

1. See Graham Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1984, cat.no.26.26.
2. See Graham Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1984, cat.no.33.10.
3. Now Philadelphia Museum of Art see Graham Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1984, cat.no.33.9.
4. See Graham Reynolds, *The Later Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, 1984, cat.no.36.17.

Cat.no.7

1. Ed. Kathryn Cave, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, New Haven and London, 1982, vol.viii, p.3142.

Cat.no.8

1. Eds. Leslie Parris, Conal Shields & Ian Fleming - Williams, *John Constable: Further Documents & Correspondence*, Ipswich, 1975, p.314.
2. C.R. Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of Constable RA*, London, 1937, p.13.
3. Ed. Kathryn Cave, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, New Haven and London, 1982, vol.viii, p.3142.
4. See Anne Rorimer, *Drawings by William Mulready*, London, 1972, cat.no.1.

Cat.no.9

1. Ed. Robert Wark, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: Discourses on Art*, New Haven and London, 1975, p.222–223.
2. For example Constable seems to have returned to an oil study of a male nude in his preparations for *The Lock* in 1824.

Cat.no.10

1. Graham Reynolds, *The Early Paintings and Drawings of John Constable*, New Haven and London, cat.no.08.45.
2. J.T. Smith, *Nollekens and His Times*, London, 1878, vol.I, pp.356–7.
3. William Hazlitt, *Conversations of James Northcote*, London, 1830, p.103.

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