A Pool by Rocks

Dr Thomas Monro

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Description

Dr Thomas Monro (1759-1833)
A Pool by Rocks

Black chalk and grey wash on laid paper watermarked with a fort
15.4 by 19.8 cm., 6 by 7 ¾ in.

Dr Monro was a physician by training and was the third of four generations of physicians appointed to Bridewell and Bethlem hospitals; his grandfather, father and one of his son's also all held the same post. He was forced to resign his position in June 1816, following critisicm of his treatment of patients under his care, which led to his appearing before a House of Commons Committee on madhouses. Shortly after his resignation, he retired from medical practice altogether. He is today better and more positively, remembered for his encouragement of a generation of young artists and his part in the establishment of the British Watercolour tradition.

Monro turned his house into an evening studio and informal academy, providing space for young artists to meet, share supper, work and study the work of other artists (including that of Alexander and John Robert Cozens; the latter became one his patients). In return, Monro retained any drawings produced during the evening. On his death, his collection was sold at Christie's in June 1833. Amongst the artists to benefit from this environment were J.M.W. Turner, Thomas Girtin, John Varley, Cristall, de Wint, William Henry Hunt and John Linnell. However, as evidenced by drawings such as the present lively example, Monro was also an accomplished amateur artist in his own right.

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