

Studies of a Banana Plant and Dogs

George Chinnery



Description

George Chinnery (1774-1852)
Studies of a Banana Plant and Dogs

Inscribed with artist's shorthand
Pen and ink and pencil
11.6 by 18.1 cm., 4 ½ by 7 in.

Provenance:
Dr Thomas Boswall Watson (1815-60);
By family descent;
With Martyn Gregory, London, 2009

Exhibited:
London, Martyn Gregory, George Chinnery: The legendary artist of the China Coast and his followers, catalogue 84, 2009, no. 54

Chinnery arrived on the South China coast in late summer 1825. He had finally abandoned India, where he had been since 1802, when his debts, and his family, finally threatened to overwhelm him. Chinnery remained in China until his death in 1852 and for the first few years he spent time in both Macao and Canton. However, after 1832 it seems he stopped visiting Canton and for the twenty years, he remained on the small three mile long peninsular that formed Macao.

Chinnery sketched constantly filling numerous sketchbooks with records of every detail of everyday life, as well as the buildings and landscapes which surrounded him. Together these formed a vast reference library from which he could then work up finished watercolours and oils. He frequently annotated his sketches, using the Gurney form of shorthand, which he probably learnt from his grandfather. Usually these were just notes on the place and date of the sketch, but sometimes he added additional information on specific details or techniques. If he was satisfied with them, he marked them with a small cross, as can be seen against all three different studies on the present sheet.

His sketches demonstrate a consistent confidence and facility. His style which he developed early in his career, was fluid and assured with a rapid often, dashed or broken line. His ability was such that he was able, with often just a few strokes, to capture exactly the subject he wanted.