

View from the Library at Colerton Hall, Leicestershire

Sir George Howland Beaumont

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Description

Sir George Howland Beaumont (1753-1827)
View from the Library at Colerton Hall, Leicestershire

Inscribed on the mount: Sir George Beaumont from the Library at Coleorton
Grey washes over pencil heightened with touches of white on grey paper
23.4 by 31.7 cm., 9 1/4 by 12 1/2 in.

This is a view of Bardon Hill as seen from Coleorton Hall, Leicestershire. Constable painted an oil of the same view, now in the Yale Center for British Art. The Beaumonts acquired Coleorton Hall in 1426 and it remained in the family until sold to the Coal Board in 1948. Sir George Beaumont commissioned George Dance the Younger to rebuild the original house in 1804-8, and he undertook alterations to the surroundings landscape. He was advised by the poet William Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy (who stayed for long periods on the estate), as well as by Uvedale Price and possibly William Sawrey Gilpin.

Beaumont became interested in art at an early stage, studying drawing under Alexander Cozens, whilst a schoolboy at Eton. He continued to paint throughout his life, undertook regular sketching tours and exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy between 1794 and 1825. He undertook a tour to Italy in 1782-3, accompanied by Thomas Hearne and Joseph Farington, and was at the centre of the British artists working in Italy at the time, including John Robert Cozens, Jacob More and Thomas Jones. Beaumont became widely regarded as the best amateur artist of the period.

Not only a gifted amateur, Beaumont became a leading patron of artists and poets, amassing a notable collection, which on his death formed part of the newly formed National Gallery, for which he was an ardent campaigner. Indeed it was Beaumont's offer of his collection to the nation, which helped influence, Lord Liverpool, then Prime Minister, to purchase the larger portion of John Julius Angerstein's collection in 1823, for the nation and thus ensuring the foundation of a National Gallery.