Ludlow Castle, Shropshire

Francis Towne

Sold

REF: 993

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Description

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Francis Towne (1740-1816)
Ludlow Castle, Shropshire

Signed lower left: F. Towne/delt. 1777/no 46 and inscribed verso: a view of Ludlow Castle, Shropshire./ Drawn on the spot/ by/ Francis Towne July 21st 1777
Pen and grey ink and watercolour on five sheets of paper joined on original washline mount
30 by 57 cm., 11 ¾ by 22 ¼ in.

Provenance:
James White (1745-1825);
Merivale Family;
Mrs Solly 1944;
With Thos. Agnew;
Sir William Worsley of Hovingham Hall, his sale, Christie's, 20th November 1984, lot 67;
Anonymous sale, Christie's, 9th November 1999, lot 74;
Private collection, London until 2011

Literature:
A.P. Oppé, `Francis Towne, Landscape Painter', Walpole Society, vol. VIII, 1919-20, pp. 95-126, p. 107;
Adrian Bury, Francis Towne, 1962, pp. 71, 95 and 140, pl. XXXVI

Exhibited:
York City Art Gallery, Watercolours by Francis Towne, 1950, no. 1

This is one of the largest known watercolours by Towne and dates from his tour to North Wales and Shropshire in the summer of 1777. The first drawing from the tour, numbered 1, is of Bridgenorth and is dated 20th June and the last is a view of Glastonbury Abbey numbered no. 54 and presumably drawn on his return journey. Another view of Ludlow Castle, numbered no. 45, is in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (see Timothy Wilcox, Francis Towne, exhibition catalogue, 1997, no. 10, p. 48, ill.) and view of the interior of the Great Room, Ludlow is in Plymouth City Art Gallery).
Ludlow Castle is situated on a promontory between the Rivers Corve and Teme overlooking the town of Ludlow. Begun as a Norman fortress, and transformed into a Royal Palace during Medieval times, it is now owned by the Earls of Powis and is open to the public. The hill in the distance behind the castle is Titterstone Clee Hill, sometimes referred to incorrectly, as Clee Hill (which is the lower hill to the east). Rising 533 m above sea level, the strange shaped summit is effectively man-made, the result of both hill fort construction during the Bronze and Iron Ages and, more recently, by years of mining for coal and quarrying for stone used in road-building.
We are grateful to Richard Stephens for his help in cataloguing this watercolour.

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