Cader Idris, North Wales

Cornelius Varley

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REF: 2961

Description

Cornelius Varley (1781-1873)
Cader Idris, North Wales

Watercolour over pencil on laid paper
21.5 by 28 cm., 8 ½ by 11 in.

Provenance:
With unidentified collector's mark verso (Lugt no.4781);
With the Manning Gallery, London;
With Spink-Leger, London, 2000;
Private Collection until 2024

Literature:
Sarah Hobrough and Lowell Libson, Feeling through the Eye - The 'New' Landscape in Britain 1800-1830, exhibition catalogue, 2000, no.91, p.95, ill. and also ill. p.14

Exhibited:
London, Spink-Leger, Feeling through the Eye, 14th March to 19th April 2000, no.91

Largely self-taught as an artist, Cornelius Varley began drawing in about 1800, when he accompanied his elder brother John into the countryside, exploring and recording the natural world. Previously, Cornelius had trained as a lensmaker, with his uncle Samuel, a watch and instrument maker and these dual careers in science and art continued throughout Cornelius' life. Cornelius undertook his first trip to North Wales during the summer of 1802 with his brother John and the architect and geologist, Thomas Webster. The success of this visit inspired him to return the following year, when he travelled with fellow artist, Joshua Cristall.

At 2930ft, Cader Idris, which lies at the southern edge of Snowdonia, dominates its surroundings. Cornelius and Joshua Cristall were fascinated by the mountain and by the constantly changing effects of light and weather on the mountain and its surroundings. Cornelius depicted the mountain from the distance, as in the present watercolour, as well in detail and up close. On one day, they climbed to the summit and spent several hours, studying and recording the endless variations, staying until dark, when they had to descend without any method of lighting their path.

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