Finch & Co



TWO BOTANICAL STUDIES OF PEARS ON A STEM WITH A LEAF, ONE DISSECTED, BY JAMES SOWERBY 1757-1822

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CIRCA 1805-1810

WATERCOLOUR AND PENCIL, WATERMARK: J WHATMAN, NOTES IN PENCIL, ONE NUMBERED 24

SIZE: 29 CM X 22 CM

LITERATURE

JAMES SOWERBY WAS THE FIRST OF A LARGE FAMILY OF ARTISTS WHO ILLUSTRATED BOTANICAL AND CONCHOLOGICAL BOOKS FOR NEARLY A CENTURY. MOST OF HIS ORIGINAL BOTANICAL DRAWINGS ARE IN THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM.

HE WAS A PUPIL OF THE MARINE PAINTER RICHARD WRIGHT (1735-1774). SOWERBY WAS REMARKABLY PROLIFIC AND HARD WORKING PRODUCING OVER 2500 ILLUSTRATIONS FOR 'ENGLISH BOTANY' 1790-1814. HIS DRAWINGS HAVE A FINE ATTENTION TO BOTANICAL DETAIL AND A VERY CLEAR SO THAT IT WAS EASY TO TRANSFER THEM TO PRINTED FORM.

IN LATER YEARS HE STUDIED ZOOLOGY, MINERALOGY, FOSSILS, FUNGI AND SHELLS, WRITING AND ILLUSTRATING WORKS ON ALL THESE SUBJECTS. A GENUS OF AUSTRALIAN LILIES WAS NAMES AFTER HIM 'SOWERBAEA' AND ALSO A WHALE WHICH HE FOUND BEACHED OFF DOGGER BANK 'MESOPLODON SOWERBIENSIS'. DESPITE THE NUMBER OF PROJECTS IN WHICH HE WAS INVOLVED HE STILL NEEDED TO TAKE IN PUPILS AND RELY ON TEACHING AND PORTRAITURE FOR A LIVING. HIS BEST KNOWN PUPIL WAS MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN AUTHOR OF THE FAMOUS 18TH CENTURY FEMINIST WORK 'VINDICATION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN'.