

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Collection of Individual Plant Studies

Canton (Guangzhou), 1803-1809

Watercolour on rice paper and European paper

All approx. 42cm high, 33cm wide

See details below

This rich and diverse collection of 48 botanical illustrations represents the astounding floral diversity of China and further afield. The paintings were procured at the request of John Roberts (1739-1810), a director and chairman of the East India Company, by Britain's first plant hunter to reside in China, William Kerr (1779-1814). Correspondence between the East India Company in London and Canton reveals the historical context of the works, and that Kerr employed local artists. The paintings in this collection had been bound into two albums in London, prior to 1810. Following Roberts' death in 1810, they were sold at auction by his executors. At some point following this sale, the albums were cut up and the paintings dispersed.

The present group comprises 7 individual plant studies, ranging from a magnificent illustration of a grape vine to a resplendent orchid. Each work represents a seamless fusion of the scientific with the artistic.

1) A Study of a Cotton Tree, *Bombax ceiba*

Watercolour on rice paper

42.5 cm high, 33cm wide

(A5476a)

2) A Study of a Greater Swamp Orchid, *Phaius tankervilleae*

Watercolour on rice paper

44cm high, 34cm wide

(A5476c)

3) A Study of a Crepe Ginger, *Hellenia speciosa*

Watercolour on rice paper

39cm high, 33.9cm wide

(A5476d)

4) A Study of an Indian Shot, *Canna indica*

Watercolour on European paper

43.2cm high, 34.2cm wide

(A5476e)

5) A Study Resembling a Prunus, *Prunus sp.*

Watercolour on I. Taylor paper

40cm high, 54 cm wide

(A5486)

6) A Study of a Grape Vine, *Vitis vinifera*

Watercolour on European (I. Taylor) paper

41cm high, 55cm wide

(A5471b)

7) A Study of a Pineapple, *Ananas comosus*

Watercolour on European (I. Taylor) paper

40.5cm high, 55cm wide

(A5478)

For further information, please [click here](#) for our online catalogue.

¹ Middleton, Bernard C. *A History of English Craft Bookbinding Technique*. New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 1996. p. 330.