

SA1171918

John Raphael Smith Portrait of Lydia & Dog

Price

Sold**Item Reference: SA1171918****Date of manufacture: Regency**

Dimensions

Height = 38 cm (15.0")

Width = 35 cm (13.8")

Description

With her playful collie dog keeping her company, this portrait shows a young lady seated with her book in a garden landscape complete with a small summerhouse. Named on the reverse as Lydia Withering, she wears a beautiful cornflower blue empire-line dress edged with white lace, a translucent lace wrap draped over her shoulders. Lydia Rickards was born into a non-Conformist family in Warwick in 1785. In the mid-1790s she and her mother settled in Hampstead where Lydia became a pupil of the poet and essayist Anna Letitia Barbauld. Lydia and her tutor were to become life-long friends and correspondents. Some of Lydia's letters to Barbauld, rescued from a skip, are now preserved at New York Public Library. In 1808, aged 23, Lydia married William Withering, the son of an eminent botanist from Birmingham. They married the following year and settled at Wick House in Somerset. Sadly, only a few years later Lydia, aged 30, was diagnosed with dementia. Following her husband's death in 1832, she continued to live in at Wick House with a companion, a nurse, a coachman and plenty of household staff. She was 82 when she died. Drawn in pastel, the portrait dates to around 1800-1805. ...

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