



FRENCH SCHOOL

The tomb of Cecil John Rhodes, Matobo National Park

signed and dated lower: [...] *Mai 1912*

pencil and watercolour

220 x 460 mm

Provenance:

With Finch & Co., London

The present drawing depicts the grave of Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) on the summit of Malindidzumu ("The hill of ancestral spirits") in Matobo National Park, Zimbabwe. The Matobo Hills are situated some 20 miles south of Bulawayo and have been occupied since at least the Middle Stone Age. Granite slopes and balancing rocks form a strikingly varied landscape and the 3,000 examples of ancient rock paintings which have been discovered in the area attest to the far-reaching history of the site. The national park, as it is known today, was established in 1926 by Rhodes. Having struck a peace-deal with the Ndebele inhabitants of the Matobo Hills in 1896 to end the Second Matebele War, Rhodes decreed that he should be buried in Matobo. His funeral in 1902 was the first (and perhaps the only) occasion that a European has been afforded the Matebele royal salute. However, it should also be noted that the Ndebele chiefs were on the payroll of the BSAC (British South Africa Company) by this point. As this watercolour attests, Rhodes' grave quickly became a tourist destination and it controversially remains so to this day. The drawing is likely one of the earliest depictions of the grave in situ.