Public access description
Constable painted this watercolour at a sad time in his life. Both his wife, Maria, and his closest friend, John Fisher, had died, and his two eldest sons had left home. He is perhaps expressing his personal unhappiness in the watercolour, for the image is certainly a melancholy one. The painting was exhibited in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1836. Some of the lines that accompanied this painting in the catalogue describe 'The mysterious monument of Stonehenge, standing remote on a bare and boundless heath...'. Constable himself probably wrote them.

Descriptive line
Watercolour, 'Stonehenge' by Constable, 1835

Physical description
Watercolour of stonehenge with a colourful sky.

Dimensions
Height: 38.7 cm, Width: 59.7 cm, Height: 575 mm Oak frame, Width: 783 mm Oak frame, Depth: 21 mm Oak frame

Museum number
1629-1888

Historical context note
'In 1836 Constable's two exhibits at the Royal Academy were the 'Cenotaph to the memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds' (now in the Tate Gallery, No. 1272) and the watercolour 'Stonehenge' (No. 395 [1629-1888]). He gave four lectures on 'The History of Landscape Painting' at the Royal Institution in May and June of this year and his last lecture, at Hampstead, on 25 July. Constable died on 31 March 1837. His almost completed painting 'Arundel Mill and Castle' (now in the Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio; see No. 379 [260-1888]) was exhibited posthumously at the Royal Academy.'


URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O74470/stonehenge-watercolour-john-constable/