Banks of the River Severn

Paul Nash

Sold

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REF: 10714

Height: 17.8 cm (7")

Width: 25.4 cm (10")

Description

PAUL NASH (British, 1889-1946)
Banks of the River Severn
Signed 'Paul Nash' (lower left) and inscribed 'wte/boats' The reverse titled & signed. Numbered ' 5N2'
Pencil and watercolour

Sheet Height 17.8 cm., 7 in., Width 25.4 cm., 10 in.
Floated in a combed, gesso frame
Frame Height 38 cm.,15 in., Length 45 cm., 17 ¾ in.,

PAUL NASH 1889-1946

Born in Kensington, London in 1889, Nash was raised from the age of twelve in Buckinghamshire, with his younger brother, John. The Nashs were traditionally landowners and farmers and Nash significantly states in his posthumous autobiography, Outline, 'I belonged to the country'. Nature was an inspiration for Nash and led him to become one of the most renowned landscape painters of his generation.

He trained at the Slade School of Art, London, between 1910-11. The influence of William Blake's poetry and the paintings of Samuel Palmer and Dante Gabriel Rossetti led to his first and second one-man shows in 1912 and 1913 being largely devoted to drawings and watercolours of brooding landscapes. This fascination with the 'spirit' of the land remained within his work throughout his career.

Posted to the Western Front during World War I as part of the Artists' Rifles, Nash's subsequent 1917 'Ypres Salient' exhibition led to his appointment as an Official War Artist. He began to create his first oil paintings and some of the most powerful images the War inspired. In 1921 Nash suffered a nervous breakdown, diagnosed as 'war strain' and moved, with his wife Margaret, to recuperate at Dymchurch on the Kent coast. The landscape and the imposing sea-wall fascinated him and at this time he began to introduce abstraction to his work. This stylistic change was enhanced by his first visit to Paris in 1922 and subsequent trips to Europe furthered his belief in using geometric elements within his work to order nature.

Between 1925 and 1933 Nash lived in or near Rye and it was just prior to this time that this subtly beautiful depiction of haystacks was executed. This was a significant time for Nash as he exhibited in 1926, 1932 and 1938 at the Venice Biennale and in 1933 he co-founded the influential art movement Unit One, with fellow artists Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, and the critic Herbert Read. It was an important, albeit short-lived, attempt to re-energise English modern art during the inter-war period. Nash's growing interest in Surrealism in the 1930s is displayed through his inclusion in the International Surrealist Exhibitions in London and Paris, in 1936 and 1938 respectively.

During World War II Nash was again employed by the Ministry of Information and the Air Ministry. He died in 1946 in Hampshire. In 1948, The Tate Gallery held a Memorial Exhibition of his work and in 1951 the Arts Council mounted an exhibition of his photographs. A further exhibition of his work was held at the Redfern Gallery in 1961
Lit: Margot Eates, Paul Nash, The Master of the Image, 1889-1946, 1973.

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