White Roses on Green

Graham Sutherland OM

Sold

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Description

Graham Sutherland, O.M. (1903-1980)
White Roses on Green gouache and pastel
15 x 10¾ in. (38.1 x 27.3 cm.)
Executed circa 1940.

GRAHAM SUTHERLAND (1903-1980)
Born in London in 1903 Sutherland initially embarked on a career in engineering but abandoned a railway engineering apprenticeship after a year in order to study at Goldsmiths' College of Art, London from 1920 to 1925, where he specialized in engraving and etching. His early pastoral prints display the influence of the English Romantic Samuel Palmer, whereby prefiguring Sutherland's later involvement within the Neo-Romantic movement in Britain.
Sutherland held his first solo exhibition in 1925 and was subsequently elected to the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers in the same year. However the Great Depression of the early 1930s caused the collapse of the print market so Sutherland began to teach, design posters and to paint. Sutherland experimented with the mediums of oil, watercolour and gouache in the form of imaginary and atmospheric landscapes, created following his first trip to Pembrokeshire in 1934. He made sketches and watercolour studies of the area and worked from these and his memory on returning to his house and studio in Kent. Sutherland was fascinated with what he saw as the magic of Pembrokeshire's landscape and returned there every year until World War II consistently finding inspiration within the environment for his anthropomorphic natural forms.
As Kenneth Clark stated, ' Mr. Graham Sutherland has described how on his country walks objects which he has passed a hundred times-a root, a thorn bush, a dead tree-will suddenly detach themselves and demand a separate existence'. This also summarises the neo-romanticism within Sutherland's work, the intense and mysterious nature of his landscapes inspired fellow neo-romantics such as Paul Nash, John Craxton and John Piper. In 1938 and 1940 Sutherland had his first two one-man exhibitions of drawings and oils at Rosenberg & Helft and the Leicester Galleries respectively. In 1940, the year the present work was created, Sutherland also designed the ballet costumes and décor for Frederick Ashton's new ballet The Wanderer 1940.
Sutherland was employed as an official artist for the duration of World War II and worked on the Home Front depicting armaments factories, blast furnaces and recording the devastating bomb damage inflicted on London during the blitz. He also painted mining and quarrying scenes in Wales and Cornwall, which allowed him to still visit the former frequently.
1946 saw Sutherland hold his first solo New York exhibition at the Buchholz Gallery and in the same year he completed the 'Crucifixion' for St Matthew's Church, Northampton. Having converted to Catholicism in 1926, from around 1950, until his death he was deeply involved in religion. His series of 'Thorn Trees' and 'Thorn Heads' developed indirectly from this interest whilst simultaneously containing elements from his favoured subject, the natural world. Sutherland taught painting at Goldsmiths' as a visiting instructor from 1946-7 and in 1949 he painted the famous portrait of Somerset Maugham, which was the first of a series of a portraits, which included Lord Beaverbrook and...

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