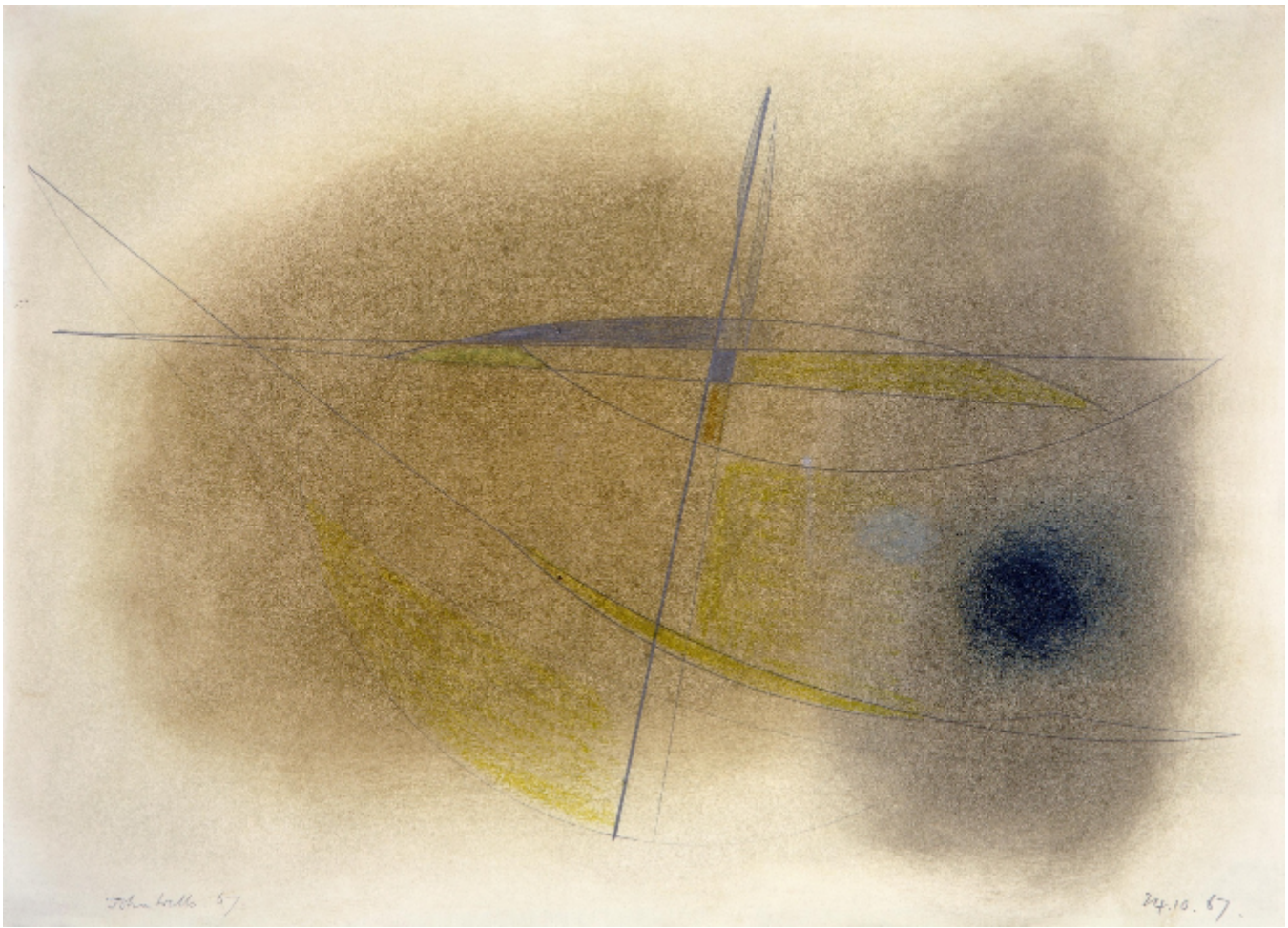
John Wells, Drawing 67/10, Pencil, Crayon, Watercolor, 1967, Newlyn

John Wells

£18,000



Howgego Historic & Modern
07974 149 912
lucy@howgegohistoricandmodern.com howgegohistoricandmodern.com

REF: 11135

Height: 43 cm (16.9")

Width: 53 cm (20.9")

Depth: 2 cm (0.8")

Description

John Wells (British, 1907-2000) Drawing 67/10 Signed and dated 'John Wells. 67.' (lower left) & dated again '24.10.67' (lower right) Signed, inscribed and dated '67/10 John Wells/1967/Anchor Studio/Trewarveneth Street/NEWLYN.' verso (on the backing board) Pencil, crayon and watercolour.

Sheet height 10.2 cm., 4 in., cm., Length 25.4 cm., 10 in. In a painted beveled section frame. Frame Height 43 cm., 17 in., length 53 cm., 21 in.,

'…here is a tremendous language capable of conveying elemental truths . Words cannot say these things ' JW ' His paintings and constructions ... have a purity and a quality that substantiate the claim that he is the most neglected major figure of the period.' Alan Bowness, 1972

John Wells, a key figure amongst the first group of St. Ives artists, is still far too often overlooked. He pioneered the full embracement of the modernist approach, adapted from constructivism, which was brought to Cornwall in the War by the likes of Nicholson, Gabo and Hepworth, whilst strictly adhering to an exploration of the natural elements as typically associated with fellow St Ives artists such as Lanyon and Frost. In 1945

Wells abandoned his medical career to become an artist, and the body of work that followed reveals his own distinct contribution to the post-war British artistic landscape; one that combines his own particular interests, a methodical approach which owes much to his medical background and a sensitive response to the theories of Constructivist art. Wells' early period spans the years of the Second World War and into the 1950s; these were years when he was prolific, arguably exploring and realising the multitude and richness of ideas conceived from the 1930s onwards, from which time he had known and corresponded with, and later lived and worked alongside artists such as the Nicholsons, Barbara Hepworth, Peter Lanyon, Terry Frost, and many others. His later work consists often in a revisiting and in subtle developments and working-through of the ideas first established in his prolific first decade.

The present work, Drawing 67/10, has many of those characteristics and motifs which originated early in Wells' career and which were continually revisited throughout his later work. Wells' output is particularly consistent and stylistically continuous. One of those themes which is strongest in his work is the Constructivist influence of Naum Gabo, and the interest in constructed and manufactured forms, shared with artists such as Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson, always in Well's case inextricable from his involvement with the landscape he lived in.

Some of Wells' earliest works were constructions, and these were praised by Naum Gabo, who described one to Ben Nicholson as 'the perfect first effort in spatial construction'.

Wells' ability with the 3D form is apparent not only in his constructions but throughout his oevre. Drawing 67/10 demonstrates this ability in its deft and deceptively simple handling of space. The pencilled linear form seems suspended through a shallow foreground, with a sense of a graceful turning through its curve. The worked-at fields of subdued colour in the background deepen the whole composition and extend the space bac...

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