LASTING IMPRESSIONS

The Fine Art Society
INTRODUCTION

Matthew Sturgis kindly brought this letter from one of my predecessors to Oscar Wilde to my attention. It is now in the Library of Congress in Washington DC who have graciously allowed us to reproduce it.

This exhibition reflects my long-held enthusiasms both personally and as a dealer. I joined The Fine Art Society 20 years ago and after 80 exhibitions at 148 New Bond Street and countless art fairs I have decided it is time to retire.

By my calculations, in the past 20 years The Fine Art Society has sold over 2,500 works by those artists whose work I most admire; artists such as Palmer (200), Whistler (350), Sickert (500), Nevinson, Nash, Sutherland, Ravilious, Bowden, Bone, Griggs, Bevan, Tanner and Geoffrey Clarke. Also many works by the artists John Copley and Ethel Gabain, whose estates I have represented for over thirty years.

My career in the art world started with prints over 40 years ago when I answered an advertisement in The Times for an assistant in a small West End art gallery. Small indeed: with my arrival the staff doubled. My employer didn't arrive until the afternoon on my first day, by which time a number of dealers had left me Victorian paintings to look after pending Robin Garton’s arrival. I guarded them outside the gallery until he arrived with the keys.

Working with Robin Garton in the small early-18th century gallery at 9 Lancashire Court, just off New Bond Street, was fascinating and absorbing. We didn’t receive many visitors, but those who did find us were generally serious and a high proportion of them made a purchase. Before long Robin decided I should make a sales trip to America, and so armed with a few names and addresses and a portfolio of prints, I flew to Boston in late November 1977. This was the start of my lifelong love affair with North America.

The first artist I got to know in my professional life was Robin Tanner, who had been a student at Goldsmiths’ College in the 1920s. He was one of very few etchers from that period still working in the 1970s. I visited Robin and Heather Tanner at their home in Wiltshire many times. We held a retrospective exhibition of his etchings in 1977 and sold almost all his stock of prints. There followed a series of publishing projects including the book Robin Tanner had written with his wife in the 1940s, Woodland Plants, and a number of new etchings. Late in life he became something of a celebrity, rather to his embarrassment.

Through Robin Tanner I met Paul Drury, a friend of Graham Sutherland. Paul, Graham and William Larkins had all been Goldsmiths’ students in the same year. Paul introduced me to Larkins’ widow and in 1979 I put on a show of his etchings. Larkins had given up printmaking for advertising in the early 1930s after the etching market had collapsed. His fellow students had thought it would be Larkins, rather than Sutherland, who would become a leading artist, according to Rowland Hilder who was a first-year when Sutherland, Drury and Larkins were seniors.

The painter Harry Holland visited an exhibition of American prints I mounted in 1980. He said he wanted to make prints himself, and in 1982 Garton & Cooke published 20 lithographs by Harry Holland, including the Homage to Electricity series. Another visitor to the gallery was the actor Peter Copley whose parents were artists, John Copley and Ethel Gabain. They had been represented by Colnaghi’s and both had died in 1950. Peter had tried to interest galleries in their work but a vast number of prints remained in the estate. Thus started my representation of their work.

The print market grew with the art market in the 1980s, and Garton & Cooke, as we had become, published regular catalogues and held exhibitions. We attended fairs, first the Bath Contemporary Art Fair,
then print fairs in London and New York. In 1987 we were forced to leave Lancashire Court and moved to a first floor space in New Bond Street. The following year we split the business and I traded from home for the next ten years. On a trip to America in 1988, I was introduced to a collector who had been buying Sickert etchings for many years. He was moving from New York to Florida and felt the climate there would adversely affect his prints and so wanted to sell. I looked at them in his apartment and could see there were some condition problems. I asked if I might see some of them out of the frames, as print people generally do, but he refused. I bought them anyway, and this started an involvement with Sickert’s work. Patrick Bourne was appointed managing director and his first important decision was to embrace contemporary art. The Fine Art Society then dealt in the work of a few living artists but the gallery was not associated with the growing interest in art that was new. So with Toby Clark as spearhead, the Fine Art Society headed in a new direction.

In 2005, the newly refurbished gallery presented exhibitions of the old and the new, in two distinct spaces, one covered in dark grey fabric, the other painted bright white. Although some of our clients were shocked and horrified, others were intrigued by the new work in the gallery and were comfortable buying from a familiar firm. New clients were also attracted by the contemporary work and became regulars. Most interesting to me was to see how many artists visited the gallery and how much they liked to see the older work.

Looking back I am grateful for the opportunity. The Fine Art Society has offered me to develop the business I had built as a private dealership. My first success with Sickert’s work led me to buy the Leicester Galleries Collection of Sickert Prints which we exhibited in New York and then the study collection Ruth Bromberg had built to assist her in writing her catalogue raisonné. The 262 prints, in the two shows in 2002 and 2004, were the cream of Sickert’s work as a printmaker, and one enlightened client took the opportunity to build the finest collection of them in existence. I also staged two other Sickert shows, in 2000 and 2013, which included paintings, drawings and prints.

Although prints have been central to my career, I have enjoyed very much working with artists such as Norman Ackroyd, Gerald Laing, Emma Sergeant and most recently William Tillyer. Geoffrey Clarke, who died three years ago was the subject of the first retrospective exhibition I organised and I still marvel at his extraordinary output of prints in a single year, 1950. In my view he is one of the most undervalued of artists.

The historic building has been a wonderful setting and I have particularly enjoyed mounting shows of Whistler prints in the gallery which presented his 1883 exhibition Arrangement in White and Yellow. Last year we assembled eighty prints including eighteen of Venice. I was struck once more by Whistler’s invention and skill and skill in producing one of the greatest series in the history of printmaking. Hanging together the Venice prints have such presence, but their compositions and motifs never repeat. Whistler provided two major deals for me; the sale of a group of outstanding etchings which had belonged to Samuel Josefowitz to an American collector, and an oil The Wifiduo to another American Whistler lover. More recently I was instrumental in the sale of William Scott of Oldham’s masterpiece Le Passeur to Tate Britain. The painting was shown at the Paris Salon in 1882 and then at The Fine Art Society later that year. From a collection in Scotland it returned to the gallery in the 1960s and we sold it once more. Fifty years on it is now in the collection of Tate.

The Fine Art Society has a singular place in the art world. I have been so fortunate to work here and wish my colleagues the very best for the future.

GORDON COOKE
Norman Ackroyd b. 1983

1. Old Wardour Pool, 1983
   Etching, signed and dated in pencil Norman Ackroyd 1983, lower right, and inscribed with title, an artist’s proof aside from the edition of 40
   24 x 35 inches (61 x 89 cm); sheet: 28⅞ x 39⅜ inches (73 x 100 cm)

   In his largest prints Norman Ackroyd best demonstrates his extraordinary qualities. This view of the lake at Old Wardour Castle in Wiltshire conveys its expanse while dispensing with its surroundings apart from the dark forms on the far bank. And yet he has precisely expressed the distance and the water’s surface beneath a dark sky with breath-taking simplicity.

2. Skellig Rocks, 1987
   Oil on paper, signed and dated Norman Ackroyd 87, lower right
   9¾ x 12½ inches (24.8 x 31.8 cm)
EDWARD BAWDEN 1903-1989

3 London Back Garden, 1927-29

Engraving, signed Edward Bawden, lower right and numbered 7 from the edition of 40 printed and published in 1974.

7⅜ x 4⅝ in (19.3 x 10.5 cm); sheet 14⅞ x 11 inches (38 x 28 cm)


London Back Garden is a view from the back of 58 Redcliffe Road where the artist, Eric Ravilious and Douglas Percy Bliss, each had studios when they were students. Bawden continued to live there, a few doors from Bliss and Ravilious at No 38.

The witty, delicate, whimsical engravings of Edward Bawden were not published in an edition until 1973, although some impressions had been printed in the 1920s. His elegant, carefully judged marks contrast with the strength of his later linocuts, an unforgiving medium on which he was able to impose his personal style.

EDWARD BAWDEN 1903-1989

4 Town Hall Yard, 1956

Linocut, signed and dated in pencil Edward Bawden 1956, lower right, inscribed Town Hall Yard Artist’s proof and numbered 5 from the edition of 35, lower left.

16 x 24½ inches (40.7 x 62.2 cm)

PROVENANCE: A.M. Haskell, bought at The Zwemmer Gallery


Town Hall Yard is in Great Bardfield, where the artist lived in Brick House, close by. It is the first in a series of linocuts of similar size done in the mid 1950s, depicting places in Essex and Brighton. Some of these were included in the exhibition we held of works by Ravilious, Bawden and Bliss in 2007 which was followed by a show of prints and drawings by Bawden in 2009.
ROBERT BEVAN 1865-1925
5 Sale at Ward’s Repository, 1921
Lithograph, printed in black ink on wove paper, from the edition of 50; also known as ‘Ward’s No 2’
12⅜ x 14⅛ inches (31.3 x 36.9 cm)
The studies of horse sales are the most celebrated of Bevan’s prints. Their large scale, the subtle use of tone and their austere beauty make them among the most important prints of their time. Although based on paintings, the compositions are translations of their subjects into a new medium, colour replaced by black, white and shades of grey which accentuate the formal qualities of the compositions. The subject was seen in a horse sale at Ward’s Repository, off the Edgeware Road, West London. It is based on an oil painting done circa 1918.

GERALD BROCKHURST 1890-1978
6 Henry Rushbury, 1930
Etching, signed in pencil G.L. Brockhurst, lower right, printed in black ink on wove paper, an impression in the thirteenth (final) state 10 x 7⅛ inches (25.3 x 18.3 cm); sheet 14½ x 10¾ inches (36.6 x 27 cm)
Henry Rushbury, like Brockhurst, studied at the Birmingham School of Art, and they later shared digs in London, and remained friends. Their careers ran in parallel and Rushbury was elected R.A. in 1936, the year before Brockhurst. This etching is based on an oil painting of 1927 which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1929. It was the first of Brockhurst’s portraits to be shown at Burlington House, and its impact on visitors to the Summer Exhibition resulted in a succession of commissions. The etching is one of Brockhurst’s greatest works, and important not only because it is a perfect likeness of his friend from student days, it also reveals much of Brockhurst’s meticulous working process. The curator Marilyn Symmes has made a detailed study of the thirteen states through which this etching progressed, published in Print Review Volume 17, 1983.
EDWARD CALVERT 1799-1883
7 After William Blake, Woodcut No IX from Thornton’s Virgil, A Young Shepherd on a Journey, c.1830
Coloured chalks on paper
4⅜ x 8 inches (11 x 20.5 cm)
Provenance: George Richmond RA, a gift from the artist in 1881; by descent to his grand-daughter Miss Abbott; W. Fothergill Robinson, bought 1921; Francis Cooke of Magdalen College, Cambridge, a gift 1927; Henry Dunkle 1964; A.A. Schumann, bought 1985
The influence of William Blake on Edward Calvert, Samuel Palmer and the other ‘Ancients’ of Shoreham, was profound. This drawing is based on Blake’s small, rough wood engraving, one of seventeen done to illustrate The Pastorals of Virgil by Robert John Thornton MD. There is also an oil version of this drawing in the British Museum, illustrated in Raymond Lister, Edward Calvert, London 1962, No XLVII, in which he has enlarged Blake’s simple composition and realised it in greater detail.

EDWARD CALVERT 1799-1883
8 The Chamber Idyll, 1831
Wood engraving, printed in black ink on wove paper: in the third (final) state from the edition of 350 published in A Memoir of Edward Calvert by his Third Son, London 1893
4⅛ x 3 inches (10.5 x 7.8 cm)
Calvert’s masterpiece is scarcely any larger than Blake’s wood engraving, however his extraordinary skill defies scale. It is one of a series of unforgettable pastoral images, engraved on wood and copper and drawn on the lithographic stone he made between 1827 and 1831. None of the others quite equals the completeness and intensity of this scene in a cottage where a young shepherd and his lover undress and go to bed. He gazes at her face, inclined towards him, as she pulls at her clothes. Outside a cow and sheep are penned beneath a starry sky, beneath their bed a bowl of fruit and beyond a lattice window frames the landscape.
We have sold three of the rare lifetime printings of Calvert’s prints and a complete Portfolio of The Early Engravings, published by Carfax and Co in 1904; the edition was of 50 sets. This includes The Flood and Ideal Pastoral Life, the two lithographs printed in 1829, the editions of which only came to light after the publication of the Memoir in 1893, ten years after the artist’s death. Calvert’s beautiful miniatures were included in two exhibitions Pastoral (2002) and Samuel Palmer: His Friends and His Followers (2012).
GEoffrey Clarke 1924-2014

9 Man February, 1950
Sugar-lift aquatint, signed in pencil, Clarke, lower right, dated and inscribed 1950 8/25, lower left, printed in black ink on laid paper, with watermark: also titled 'Man (Complexities of Man)' 14 x 8 1/2 inches (35.4 x 16.5 cm); sheet 16 x 8 inches (40.7 x 20.1 cm)

Reference: Judith LeGrove, Geoffrey Clarke: A Sculptor's Prints, Bristol 2012, p 111, No 69

Many of Geoffrey Clarke's ideas for sculpture were first expressed as prints. This work is indicative of his practice and relates to an iron sculpture, Figure (1950), also known as Complexities of Man, exhibited at the 1952 Venice Biennale and now in the collection of the Tate.

In 2000 The Fine Art Society mounted a large retrospective exhibition, Geoffrey Clarke: Sculpture, Constructions and Works on Paper 1949-2000, the first show of his work in London for many years. Three further shows followed including one of Clarke's etchings from 1950, a year of extraordinary productivity, in 2006.

GEoffrey Clarke 1924-2014

10 Warrior II, 1956
Sugar-lift aquatint on steel, signed, dated and inscribed in pencil Clarke '56 Proof, lower right, printed in grey and white ink on wove paper 38 1/2 x 23 3/4 inches (96.2 x 60 cm)


Robert Erskine, director of the St George's Gallery, encouraged Geoffrey Clarke to make some large-scale prints and in August 1956 he drove to Paris with five plates etched in his studio at Stowe Hill, Suffolk. Warrior II was one of these, taken to Atelier Lacourière, where Picasso's sugar aquatints were printed, and Jacques Frélaut printed four impressions. This is one of two experimental colour proofs, the other now being in the collection of the British Museum. A typed note by the artist on the frame of one print reads, 'An edition has never been made. The plate was mislaid soon after proofing in Paris in 1956.'
GEORGE CLAUSEN 1852-1944

11 Self Portrait, c.1890
Etching with drypoint, signed in pencil George Clausen, lower right, printed in black ink on laid paper: in the second (final) state 4 3/4 x 3 1/4 inches (12 x 8.3 cm)

Although he was born in London, early in his career, Clausen left the capital for Hertfordshire. He was highly innovative as a painter of English rural life in the latter part of the 19th century, and landscape was his principal source of subjects. He was interested in contemporary French painting at a time when it was largely unappreciated in Britain.

PRUNELLA CLOUGH 1919-1999

12 Cranes, 1952
Lithograph, signed in pencil Clough, lower right, printed in colours on wove paper 17 1/4 x 14 1/2 inches (43 x 37 cm); sheet 23 3/8 x 18 5/8 inches (60.8 x 47.9 cm)

Printmaking was a constant part of Prunella Clough’s practice as an artist and she acquired her own lithographic press in 1948. Her earliest subject matter was found on the beaches and fishing ports of East Anglia, and her work in the 1950s reflected the urban industrial landscape. Her prints were shown at the Redfern Gallery from 1948 to 1952.
JOHN COPLEY 1875-1950

13 A Lavatory, 1909
Lithograph, signed in pencil John Copley, lower right, printed in colours on laid Japan paper: numbered 28 from the edition of 35, with the stamp of the Senefelder Club (Lugt 639) 13 x 18 1/4 inches (33.2 x 47.5 cm)
REFERENCE: Harold Wright, The Lithographs of John Copley & Ethel Gabain, Chicago 1924, No 27

Four lithographs by John Copley, each printed in colours, were included in the first exhibition of the Senefelder Club in 1910. The purpose of the club, named after the inventor of lithography, was to revive interest in a neglected medium. A Lavatory was the largest and most complex of the four, printed in seven colours. It was his first colour print and an impression was bought by the Victoria & Albert Museum.

It shows the lavatory beneath the Empire, Leicester Square, London, where a number of men prepare for the evening under the detached gaze of the attendant. It exemplifies the artist’s manner of observing his fellow humans, detached, curious and slightly satirical.

Notwithstanding the V&A’s acquisition, his colour prints did not sell, and after a few more efforts in 1912 and 1914, the artist abandoned colour. The subtlety of his use of black and tone is evident throughout his oeuvre, and particularly in the face of La Bionda, one of his last lithographs. The model was Carmen Hyde, who had sat for John Copley’s wife, Ethel Gabain regularly. She painted over fifty oils of her.

The Fine Art Society has staged four exhibitions of John Copley’s work and the catalogues include a complete list of his 155 etchings (1998) and 252 lithographs (2000). Not only did he print the editions of all his own work, but he also printed for his wife.

JOHN COPLEY 1875-1950

14 Athletes Dressing, 1912
Lithograph, signed in pencil John Copley Imp, lower centre, printed in thirteen colours on laid paper: from the edition of 20 8 1/5 x 8 1/5 inches (21.5 x 21.1 cm)
REFERENCE: Harold Wright, The Lithographs of John Copley & Ethel Gabain, Chicago 1924, No 78

JOHN COPLEY 1875-1950

15 La Bionda, 1937
Lithograph, signed in pencil John Copley, printed in black ink on laid paper: from the edition of 18 13 x 13 inches (33 x 33 cm)

Illustrated back cover
ETHEL GABAIN 1883-1950

16 Stripes and Black, 1914

Lithograph, signed in pencil Ethel Gabain, printed in black ink on laid paper: from the edition of 18
14 x 9 1/4 inches (35.5 x 23.5 cm)

REFERENCE: Harold Wright, The Lithographs of John Copley & Ethel Gabain, Chicago 1924, No 144

The images of young women in Ethel Gabain’s lithographs and paintings have recently struck a chord with a new audience, after years of neglect since her death. Her sympathy for her subjects and her ability to convey emotion, combine with her skill to evoke a strong response. Her contemporaries readily appreciated her lithographs, and Harold Wright, who ran the print department at R&D Colnaghi, then the leading print publisher and dealer in London, asked if he might represent her in 1911. These two prints date from one of her most productive periods, which coincided with the birth of her first child Peter in 1915. She did not allow her domestic situation to interfere with her work as an artist. Her home was used as the setting for many of her lithographs and her sisters were often her models.

The simple, direct draughtsmanship of Stripes and Black, the woman set against a window, contrasts with the eloquent dark passages of Au Clair de la Lune, inspired by the old French folk song. The figure in a pierrot costume emerges from the shadows, lit by the moon.

ETHEL GABAIN 1883-1950

17 Au Clair de la Lune, 1916

Lithograph, signed in pencil Ethel Gabain, printed in black ink on laid paper: from the edition of 24
13 3/4 x 10 1/4 inches (35 x 26.5 cm)

REFERENCE: Harold Wright, The Lithographs of John Copley & Ethel Gabain, Chicago 1924, No 173
ERIC GILL 1882-1940

Standing Female Nude, c.1912
Ink and bodycolour on tracing paper
6 1/8 x 2 1/8 inches (16.8 x 6.7 cm)

PROVENANCE: Victor Arwas

The artist often used tracing paper for preparatory sketches both for his wood engravings and carvings. However, this piece is clearly a finished work in its own right. Gill has treated this work in the same way as many of his wood engravings, where the negative space represents a solid form, given shape by the densely inked background. The untreated surface of the tracing paper represents flesh, while colour is sparingly applied to the hair, nipples, lips, eyes and cheeks, breathing life into the figure.
HARRY HOLLAND b. 1941

19 Huldigung an die Elektrizität
9\(\frac{3}{4}\) x 9\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches (25 x 24.5 cm)

20 Hulde aan Electrisiteit
10\(\frac{1}{4}\) x 10\(\frac{1}{4}\) inches (26 x 27.5 cm)

21 Hommage à l’Electricité
10\(\frac{3}{4}\) x 9\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches (27 x 24.5 cm)

22 Homage to Electricity
11 x 9 inches (27.8 x 22.7 cm)

23 Omaggio all’Elettricità
9\(\frac{3}{4}\) x 11 inches (24.5 x 28 cm)

Lithographs, signed in pencil W.H. Holland, printed in black ink on wove paper; from the edition of 30

The series of five lithographs *Homage to Electricity*, published by Garton & Cooke in 1982, were based on paintings which the artist said were inspired by his wife’s reluctance to change a light bulb. The title was translated into a different language for each subject in the series.
PETER LANYON 1918-1964

24 Church Town, 1948
Screenprint with gouache, signed, numbered and dated in ballpoint Lanyon 6 /7 48, lower right, also signed and inscribed verso Churchtown Peter Lanyon 1948 6 /7 Silk Screen £2
12 x 10½ inches (30.5 x 26.1 cm); sheet 14 ¾ x 11 inches (37.6 x 28.2 cm)


As the only artist in the St Ives group who was a native of the town, Peter Lanyon became a central figure in post-War British art, and also one of the most innovative printmakers of the period. Church Town was one of the artist’s first screenprints to be made in Britain, and he also experimented in a number of other media, including lithography, etching, linocut, monotype and slate reliefs. His subject matter was principally the Cornish landscape. In an interview recorded for the British Council in 1962 he said: ‘It is impossible for me to make a painting which has no reference to the very powerful environment in which I live.’

Church Town does not appear to have been exhibited during the artist’s lifetime, but an impression numbered 1/7 was included in an exhibition of his gouaches and drawings at the Bear Lane Gallery, Oxford in 1969. Each impression differs, as the artist added gouache to the screenprint which also shows variations in the small edition of only seven.

WILLIAM LARKINS 1901-1974

25 Copenhagen Place, Limehouse, 1925
Etching, signed in pencil William M. Larkins, lower right, and inscribed “Copenhagen Place-Limehouse” State 6. Imp.22. No.3. lower left 4 ⅛ x 4 ⅛ inches (10.2 x 10.2 cm); sheet 10 x 7⅛ inches (25.6 x 19.5 cm)


At Goldsmiths’ College William Larkins and Graham Sutherland sat side by side in the School of Art, and with their contemporary Paul Drury, they made their name as printmakers while still at college. It was Larkins who bought a print by Samuel Palmer in 1924 or 1925 in the Charing Cross Road, and took it back to show his fellow students.

Larkins was from the East End of London, the son of a steeplejack, and was elected an Associate of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers & Engravers in 1925. Many of his fellow students thought he would be one of the great artists of their generation, but he moved instead into advertising and joined J. Walter Thompson in 1932.
KENNETH MARTIN 1905-1984

Abstract, 1952

Linocut, signed and dated in pencil, Kenneth Martin 52, lower left, printed in black and grey on Japan paper 16 1/2 x 11 3/4 inches (42 x 30 cm); sheet 29 6/8 x 19 3/4 inches (75.5 x 50.1 cm)

Kenneth Martin is a key figure in post-war British art. He, his wife Mary Martin and Victor Pasmore were central to the Constructivist movement in Britain, which brought a new approach to the tradition of abstraction pioneered by Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth in the 1930s.

This rare linocut is among a number of prints he made in the early 1950s, examples of which are in the collections of Tate Britain and the British Museum. They have an austere beauty.

PAUL NASH 1889-1946

Rain, Lake Zillebeke, 1917

Lithograph, signed and dated in pencil Paul Nash 1917, lower right inscribed, Rain, Lake Zillebeke, lower left, printed in black ink on wove paper; the edition was 100; 10 x 14 1/2 inches (25.5 x 36.2 cm); sheet 17 3/4 x 21 5/8 inches (45.5 x 55.5 cm)

At the outbreak of war, Paul Nash enlisted in the army. He was posted to the Ypres Salient in February 1917, but was injured when he fell into a trench in June and he was returned to England. A successful exhibition in London led to his appointment as an Official War Artist and he went back to Flanders just after the last phase of the Battle of Passchendaele. The exhibition included all seven lithographs he made of War subjects, some of which are of great rarity. Rain, Lake Zillebeke was based on a chalk drawing now in the Imperial War Museum, Nightfall, Zillebeke District.

CRW NEVINSON 1889-1946
28 The Street Acrobat, 1919
Pastel on paper, signed and dated C.R.W. Nevinson 1919, lower left. 241/2 x 19 inches (62.5 x 48.3 cm)


“For Nevinson, there is no armistice, he is always at war,” Kineton Parkes observed. Although the artist is celebrated as a War Artist, his other great subject was the city. Searching for fresh subjects after 1918, London and then New York provided them. Crowds interested him, and in the same year he made two large lithographs, The Workers and Wet Evening, Oxford Street in which people are pressed together, as well as another pastel on a large scale, The Food Queue from 1918. The acrobat’s contortions on the wet cobblestones appear to be of little interest to the men and women queuing, wrapped in raincoats, but it has arrested the artist’s attention.

CRW NEVINSON 1889-1946
29 Le Port, 1919
Lithograph, signed and dated lower right in pencil C.R.W. Nevinson 1919, lower right: edition of 25. 20 x 15 1/4 inches (50.8 x 39 cm)


The port was probably Cherbourg. Nevinson arrived there in November 1918 on his way to Paris. Following the Armistice, wartime blackout regulations had been relaxed and Cherbourg’s harbour was brightly lit while ships were displaying their own lights for the first time since August 1914. The lithograph was first exhibited with the Senefelder Club in 1919. Jonathan Black has suggested that Le Port may be evidence that Nevinson was already seeking to appear old-fashioned, harking back some 20 years to paintings of ports by Monet and Pissarro.
Ben Nicholson made prints in three phases spread over his career, the first being the linocuts (and a single woodcut) of the late 1920s and 1930s. Linocut was not popular when he took it up; etching was the print medium most artists then used. He was probably introduced to linocut by Claude Flight, a fellow member of the 7 & 5 Society.

As Jeremy Lewison has written, 'Given Nicholson's dual roots in Victorian Arts and Crafts and twentieth-century modernism it was not inappropriate that he should take an interest in (linocut). In 1927 he was already displaying a number of modernist mannerisms in his paintings: a shallow picture space, an awareness of Cubism, an emphasis on materials and an interest in the childlike and primitive. His early linocuts manifest all these characteristics.'

The dedication is to Dr Thomas J. Honeyman (1891-1971), born in Glasgow, who joined the art dealers Reid & Lefevre in 1929. Ten years later he was appointed Director of Glasgow Art Galleries and Museums and he held the post until 1954. Two major exhibitions took place during his tenure, Picasso-Matisse in 1946 and Van Gogh in 1948. He also bought the Salvador Dali painting Christ of St John on the Cross, one of the gallery's most celebrated and controversial works. It was Honeyman who invented the term 'Scottish Colourists', to describe Peploe, Fergusson, Hunter and Cadell.

**BEN NICHOLSON 1894-1982**

**31 I.C.I. shed, 1948**

Drypoint, signed and dated in pencil, Ben Nicholson 1948, lower left and numbered 1 from the edition of 10, lower right, printed in black ink on wove paper; inscribed in pencil by the artist I.C.I shed and 12 gns, verso 3¾ x 9¾ inches (20 x 25 cm); sheet 10⅛ x 13½ inches (25.9 x 34.1 cm)

**PROVENANCE:** acquired from the artist circa 1948 and by descent


The drypoints Ben Nicholson made in 1948 were done at the instigation of Peter Gregory, owner of the publishers Lund Humphries, who wanted to include an original print in a proposed deluxe edition of their forthcoming monograph on Nicholson's work.

Nicholson had moved to St Ives in 1939, and _I.C.I. shed_ was one of four drypoints of the Cornish landscape he made in 1948. The new I.C.I. building was in Hayle, a few miles up the coast from St Ives. Jeremy Lewison has written illuminatingly about the print: ‘The drypoint ... is one of his most successful prints. Combining the rectilinear with the serpentine, he appears to have mastered the medium. No heavy shading, just delicate hatching; a swathe of darkness on the horizon, an ugly pylon that Nicholson turns into a thing of beauty and some curious streetlights that bend forward like flamingos. The print is rhythmic, light and ‘alive’, as Nicholson might have called it. Architecture in this and other images of the period begins to take on a life of its own and was later to become a dominant motif.’

Like his pre-War linocuts, few impressions of the post-War drypoints exist. The edition of _I.C.I. Shed_ was only 10, no doubt reflecting the demand the artist felt there might be in that straitened period. It appears that a number of the impressions were given away to friends who collected his work. The price written on the back is interesting, as impressions were on sale for £1.10s at the Lefèvre Gallery in London in November 1948 in the exhibition of Recent Paintings 1947-48 by Ben Nicholson. Somehow the asking price had increased to £10.10s before the artist parted with it.

BEN NICHOLSON 1894-1982

3.2 Tree, Column and Moon, 1967

Etching, signed and dated in pencil Nicholson 67, lower right, printed in black ink on wove paper, watermark BFK (Rives), with the blindstamp of François Lafranca, lower left: numbered 48 from the edition of 50, 17 7/8 x 17 1/2 inches (45.5 x 44.4 cm); sheet 22 7/8 x 23 1/2 inches (58.5 x 59.5 cm)

To hear the Lark begin his flight,  
And singing startle the dull night,  
From his watch-tower in the skies,  
Till the dappled dawn doth rise …

Palmer referred to this work as 'Dawn' until it was published in 1857, and it is this time of day, as the sun rises to illuminate the landscape and the skylark above, in which his sense of a re-awakened vision may be felt. It is a work both small in scale but intense in detail, showing great technical skill.

In The Portfolio, 1872, F.G. Stephens wrote: 'The refined spirit of this little gem of art and poetry baffles words of description. Ineffable is the way in which the rays of the sun interpose between us and the ribbed clouds of fugitive night, giving an idea of palpitation in perfect accord with the outpouring of the voice of the bird, and the awakening landscape'.

SAMUEL PALMER 1805-1881

33 The Skylark, 1850

Etching, printed in black ink on chine appliqué, on a backing sheet of wove paper, as published in Etchings for the Art Union of London by the Etching Club, 1857 plate 17 in the seventh state (of eight). 4 1/4 x 3 1/4 inches (11.3 x 9.9 cm); sheet 14 1/4 x 10 1/4 inches (36.4 x 26.1 cm)


This was Palmer's first real etching and he selected a motif which he had already painted in a sepia of the 1830s (Lister 140), exhibited at The Fine Art Society in the 1881 Memorial Exhibition [5], and an oil of circa 143 (Lister 375, now in the collection of the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff). There is a preparatory study for the etching in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Mr and Mrs Lewis B. Williams Collection (Lister 497); the subject was inspired by Milton's poem L'Allegro (II, lines 41-44):

To hear the Lark begin his flight,  
And singing startle the dull night,  
From his watch-tower in the skies,  
Till the dappled dawn doth rise …

SAMUEL PALMER 1805-1881

34 The Lonely Tower, 1879

Etching, signed in pencil S. Palmer, lower right, and inscribed Trial Proof, lower left, printed in black ink on wove paper, with the blindstamp A.H.P. Private Press, lower left corner of sheet; inscribed verso A.H.P. April 5th 1879; in the fourth state (of seven). 7 1/2 x 10 inches (19.9 x 25.4 cm); sheet 12 1/8 x 16 1/8 inches (31.5 x 41.3 cm)

PROVENANCE: Frederic George Stephens, a gift from the artist 1880


Inscribed on an accompanying label June 16 1884 This impression of "The Lonely Tower" was given given me by Samuel Palmer, see his letter to me Dec. 1880, where he said it had been put aside for me F.G. Stephens. Also the lines from Il Penseroso which the artist illustrates.

The subjects which Palmer chose for his etchings were all close to his heart but perhaps none more so than The Lonely Tower. It came to be regarded as his finest etching by many of his contemporaries, but unusually the principal feature of the landscape was not only a particular place, but one which he could see in the distance from the room in Furze Hill House, Redhill where he had made his studio. The hill was close to the spot where his son had died.

In his last years, Palmer's work became more careful, meditative and richly laboured, as William Vaughan has described it. F.G. Stephens had compared the work of the Shoreham period with Keats, and the later work with Tennyson. The melancholy is combined with richness and depth, and The Lonely Tower appears complete as a work of art and as a statement of emotion long considered.
VICTOR PASMORE 1908-1998
35 Points of Contact No.1, 1965
Screenprint, signed in pencil with initials VP, lower right, and numbered 11 from the edition of 70, lower left, printed in colours on wove paper, to the edges of the sheet, at Kelpra Studio
27 × 39 ¾ inches (68.5 × 101 cm)

In 1965 the Tate Gallery mounted a major retrospective exhibition of Victor Pasmore’s work 1925-65. In the same year he made this large screenprint, numbered 1 from a series which included 27 subjects made between 1964 and 1974 at Kelpra Studio with Chris Prater. In fact No.2 was made the previous year. It is printed on a large scale, with swooping liquid forms surrounding the solid shapes at the centre.

ERIC RAVILIOUS 1903-1942
36 Commander Looking Through the Periscope, 1941
Lithograph, printed in colours on wove paper, a proof before the addition of a red tint, additional work to the flying boat and grey to the sea and sky seen through the periscope; one of about 50 impressions printed at W.S. Cowell, Ipswich
11 × 12 ½ inches (28 × 32 cm)

The Submarine series was originally conceived as a children’s painting book but after the idea was abandoned, Ravilious decided to produce ten lithographs himself. Although the Leicester Galleries offered them for sale, the series was never published in the aftermath of the artist’s tragic early death. Impressions of the prints became part of the artist’s estate but some subjects are rarer than others. The commander depicted is Lieutenant R.E. Campbell whose submarine was L.7.
WALTER SICKERT 1860-1942

37 Venice, The Horses of St Mark’s, 1901

Etching, aquatint, drypoint, stipple and roulette, printed in warm black ink on wove paper, watermark P.M.F; the only recorded impression of this print, the first version of the subject 12¼ x 9½ inches (31.8 x 24.7 cm); sheet 19¼ x 15¼ inches (49.6 x 39 cm)

PROVENANCE: Ruth and Joseph Bromberg; private collection


The three versions of The Horses of St Mark’s signal a new direction in Sickert’s progress as a printmaker. For the first time he worked on paintings and prints of the same subject simultaneously. In the unusual aspect of St Mark’s in Venice he devised an image which was unmistakably his own. Ruth Bromberg describes the series of prints in the introduction to her catalogue thus:

The surviving preparatory drawings for this composition vividly demonstrate their role in the interchange between the paintings and prints. The years spent solely drawing and painting seem to have given Sickert new impetus for working on copper. The versions of The Horses of St Mark’s are among his most experimental prints. However similar in composition, the three versions differ widely in technique. They are significant examples of Sickert’s new striving for expression and experimentation on the copper plate. He searched for new and unknown qualities and radically departed from the tried-and-tested conventional methods of printmaking. The plate surface of all three was attacked with granules, liquids and acid, in addition to varying tools, in combinations not previously explored, nor ever repeated. Sickert tried to create every possible tonal variation that could be achieved on copper.

Sickert would have been mindful of the effect Venice had had upon the work and career of Whistler, his first teacher. No doubt he was equally eager to describe the city’s familiar buildings in his own artistic language. He also made etchings of the Façade of St Mark’s and of The Rialto bridge. The ambitions he may have held for these three prints were not realised and they were never published.

WALTER SICKERT 1860-1942

38 A Little Cheque, 1915

Etching, signed and inscribed in ink, Sickert (state), lower right, and A little cheque, lower left, printed on wove paper in black ink, one of only two proofs recorded in the first state (of two), before letters and publication by Carfax & Co 6 x 4 inches (15.2 x 10.2 cm); sheet 12¼ x 10 inches (31.5 x 25.7 cm)


According to the artist’s inscription on an impression of this etching in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the models were the painter Charles Ginner and Mrs Dora Sly. She rented a bedsit at 8 Fitzroy Street where Sickert had a studio from 1905. The interior is the studio Sickert rented at 24 Red Lion Square in April 1914 and gave up towards the end of August. Dora Sly (née Erichsen) was a Danish-born painter who studied with Ginner in Paris and shared an exhibition with him in Buenos Aires in 1909. The possibility that the title was an oblique reference to the nature of their relationship is discussed in Wendy Baron’s essay ‘The Many Faces of Dora Sly’, The Burlington Magazine, July 2003 No 1204 Vol CXLV, pp 516-19.

There were also three drawings and a large etched version, of which only three impressions are recorded. The smaller etching was made for publication in the Carfax series, and the only other recorded proof before letters is in the Bibliothéque Nationale de France, Paris. The marble bust on the desk is of the champion boxer Tom Sayers.
Ennui is Sickert’s most famous composition, known from the largest oil version presented to the Tate Gallery in 1924 by the Contemporary Art Society. There are four other painted versions, one of which is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. There are also several drawings of the subject and three etched versions. The Bromberg collection contained two proofs of the large and three of the medium plate. Virginia Woolf described it in Walter Sickert: a Conversation, first published in 1934.

The image lacks the implied brutality of The Camden Town Murder series and the knowing, mischievous titles of the other two figure compositions. Nonetheless it must have appeared shocking to its audience in 1914, presenting such a blunt, hopeless view of a marriage.

The models are Marie Hayes and Hubby, seen in a room in a house Sickert referred to as the Wellington House Academy at 247 Hampstead Road, London, on the corner of Granby Street. Sickert was pleased with the etching and wrote to Ethel Sands of it in 1914 that ‘I have at last done one etching that is good after dabbling with copper off & on for 30 years.’
Graham Sutherland
1903-1980

41 Hop Fields, c.1925

Ink and wash drawing on wove paper; inscribed in pencil on the original mount in another hand "Hop Fields" by Graham Sutherland (c. 1925?)

To Roger & Annette from John Spring 1948

To Roger and Annette from John April MCM XL VIII

5½ x 7½ inches (14 x 19 cm)

'It seemed to me wonderful that a strong emotion, such as was Palmer's, could change and transform the appearance of things. I know that this obsession was a young man's passion, an adolescent flame, which was bound to end in one's "first death". Nevertheless the idea of the way in which emotion can change appearances has never left me.'

The way in which Graham Sutherland describes his response to Samuel Palmer's work nearly fifty years after he first encountered it and made this drawing is illuminating. It is evident that both artists had the same objective, and that in Palmer, the young Sutherland found a kindred spirit. At the time Sutherland was still a student of 20 or 21 at Goldsmiths' College but he was already making his reputation. His first one-man show of etchings and drawings was held at the Twenty-One Gallery, London in 1924 and he had already displayed precocious skill as a draughtsman.

It was Graham Sutherland's practice to make preparatory drawings for his prints and this work relates to Village, the first of a series of six intensely pastoral etchings from the period 1925 to 1927. It also relates to the etching Warningcamp which shows, in reverse, the building in the centre right of the composition:

Warningcamp is a hamlet on the outskirts of Arundel in Sussex, an area which also provided the subjects for the early etchings The Black Rabbit and Fetching Water.

The composition includes elements from the Sussex landscape as well as from the village of Cudham in Kent, near Shoreham where Samuel Palmer had lived and been inspired. The etching Village shows Sutherland's work to be maturing fast and his ability to arrange and distil. This drawing differs from the etching in several areas. The upper part is cropped so that the tips of the branches of the central tree touch the top edge of the image. The shape cut off by the lower edge is in the same position as the head of the girl who kneels with a basket in the etching. The artist has placed her, a broken gate and other detail in the foreground and these devices add to the sense of distance.

In a letter to his biographer Roger Berthoud at the end of his life, Sutherland wrote 'The best of the Shoreham drawings (by Palmer), the very best, were unsentimental. The landscapes were daring, and were drawn from unexpected viewpoints: The Girl in the Ploughed Field astonished me with its total disregard for conventional composition.' This drawing shows Sutherland himself fulfilling what he had admired in Palmer's work, although the image is perhaps more reminiscent of Millet, another early influence. Ink and wash allowed him to build an image of great intensity, translated in the linear patterns for the etching.

Graham Sutherland, from the introduction to the exhibition catalogue The English Vision, William Weston Gallery, London 1973
GRAHAM SUTHERLAND 1903-1980

42 Village, 1925
Etching, signed in pencil Graham Sutherland, lower right, printed in black ink on laid paper, watermark Russell & Edmeads, in the third (final) state, from the edition of about 85
6⅛ x 8⅞ inches (17.5 x 22.5 cm)


GRAHAM SUTHERLAND 1903-1980

43 Hanger Hill, 1929
Etching, signed in pencil Graham Sutherland, lower right, printed in warm-black ink on antique laid paper, watermark fleur-de-lys numbered 54 (from the edition of 77)
5⅞ x 5⅞ inches (14.1 x 13.1 cm);
sheet 8¼ x 7¼ inches (22.3 x 18.5 cm)

It was as a printmaker that Graham Sutherland first established a reputation, and *Clegyr-Boia* was the last etching he made. The 1930s saw the collapse of the print market along with the Slump, and young artists who had made a good living in the 1920s had to find new sources of income. Sutherland received commissions for commercial work, including posters for Shell and London Transport, and he made lithographs for Curwen Press and Robert Wellington’s venture ‘Contemporary Lithographs’.

Feeling that he had exhausted the possibilities of etching, he made his first efforts in oils and continued to paint in watercolours. He first visited Pembrokeshire in 1934 and the landscape there was to be a source of inspiration throughout the rest of his life.

The plate of *Clegyr-Boia*, a prehistoric site on the St David’s peninsula, was commissioned in March 1938 by Oliver Simon, the editor of *Signature*, who became famous as a book designer with Curwen Press. Simon first met Sutherland in 1935 and the two became close friends. The Simons and the Sutherlands saw a good deal of one another and holidayed together. Simon recalled a particularly memorable week one summer, spent in a rented cottage at Solva on the Pembrokeshire coast.

The strong linear qualities of Sutherland’s early drawings and paintings of Pembrokeshire, done in ink, wash and watercolour, are also to be found in *Clegyr-Boia*. It has the qualities of his earlier pure etchings but also shows the painterly skills recently acquired, which no doubt suggested the addition of aquatint.

**GRAHAM SUTHERLAND 1903-1980**

**44 Clegyr-Boia 11; Landscape in Wales, 1938**

Etching and aquatint, printed on wove paper, as issued as frontispiece to *Signature* No 9, July 1938, printed by Walsh of London and published by Curwen Press in an edition of 750 copies

3 ⅝ x 5 ⅜ inches (9.7 x 14.9 cm); sheet 9 ½ x 7 ¼ inches (24.2 x 18 cm)

**PROVENANCE**: Milner Gray and by descent

**EXHIBITED**: London, The Leicester Galleries

The landscape of Wales was the inspiration for Sutherland to become a painter. It was a struggle to suppress his natural gifts for draughtsmanship and to adopt the brush. The muted colours and twisted shapes he found in Pembrokeshire provided the visual stimulus which culminated in his masterpiece, *Entrance to a Lane* 1939, in the collection of Tate Britain. *Marsh below Hills* shares many characteristics with *Entrance to a Lane*, but it still refers back to the intensity of his earlier etchings.

Milner Gray, who owned this painting, left Goldsmiths’ College at the end of 1921, the year Graham Sutherland started. They shared digs in Blackheath while Sutherland was still at the College: Gray had set up a design consultancy, Bassett Gray. He showed Sutherland’s work to Jack Beddington, who conceived the Shell advertising campaign, commissioning work from many of the best contemporary artists. Gray later lodged with Graham and Kathleen and in 1980, he sat for one of the last portraits Sutherland painted.

**GRAHAM SUTHERLAND 1903-1980**

**45 Marsh below Hills, 1939**

Ink and wash on gesso primed panel, signed and dated with initials G S 39, lower right: part of another subject painted in oil versus, signed, dated and inscribed *Marsh below Hills 1939 Graham Sutherland* 8 ⅝ x 5 ⅜ inches (21.4 x 13.5 cm)

**PROVENANCE**: Milner Gray and by descent

**EXHIBITED**: London, The Leicester Galleries
CHRISTMAS, 1929

Etching, signed in pencil, Robin Tanner fec. et imp., lower centre, and inscribed CHRISTMAS: Artist’s Proof, lower left margin, a proof printed in black ink on antique laid paper, watermark T H Saunders, before the edition published by The Penn Print Room in 1974. 13 x 11 inches (33 x 27.9 cm); sheet 17 ¼ x 14 inches (43.6 x 35.4 cm)


Most of the studies for the etching were made at Biddeston and Castle Combe. ‘One moonlit night Heather and I walked to Castle Combe, and drew the tall Flemish building, the great barns, the inn, and the market cross itself. It was an uncanny feeling, working through the small hours in that empty village where the moonlight lay in sheets of silver so bright and constant that we drew as easily as by day.’ The design was begun in October 1928 and the etching completed the following spring. The artist printed the entire edition of 50 in Chippenham, published by McDonald and Nicholson from their premises at 23 Ryder Street, in St James’s. A second edition was printed by Thomas Ross and Son in 1974 and published by the Penn Print Room, and a final edition of 12 was published by Garton & Cooke in 1982.

Hedge Flowers, 1936

Etching, signed and inscribed in pencil, Robin Tanner fec. et imp., lower centre, and Hedge Flowers: (Needled in Leeds 1935-36.) This impression, on paper made in 1970, was printed at Old Chapel Field Press for Grace & Cyril 1977, lower margin edge, printed in black ink on laid paper, an impression printed by the artist before the first edition of 12 published in 1982 by Garton & Cooke. 9 x 6 ¼ inches (23 x 16 cm); sheet 13 ¼ x 10 inches (33.9 x 25.6 cm)


The design for this etching derived from drawings of wild flowers, and its abundant mix of species, so carefully arranged to give each one the chance to show itself, anticipates the drawings Robin Tanner made for Woodland Plants in the 1940s. It includes white dead nettle, greater stitchwort, Jack-in-the-hedge, wild arum or cuckoopint, ground ivy and a bluebell in bud. This etching was Robin Tanner’s diploma print after his election as an Associate of the Royal Society of Painter- Etchers and Engravers in 1936.
The Dog on the Kennel, 1858
Etching, printed in black ink on japan paper, an impression in the second (final) state: there was no published edition
2 3/4 × 3 1/2 inches (7.2 × 8.9 cm); sheet 5 1/4 × 6 1/4 inches (13.3 × 16 cm)


This was drawn during Whistler’s tour of the Rhineland in search of subjects for etchings to be published in the French Set, between 14th August and 7th October 1858. Both the kennel and the dog were also depicted in The Unsafe Tenement. Frederick Wedmore recorded that Whistler was working on the larger plate when the dog jumped up on the kennel, but put it aside to make the small study. This information came from Samuel P. Avery, whose Whistler collection is in the New York Public Library, and first met the artist in 1867. The etching has been rarely exhibited but was lent by Avery to the Union League Club in New York in 1881.

The Lime-Burner, 1859
Etching and drypoint, printed in warm black ink on thin laid japan paper, an impression in the second (final) state, aside from the edition published in A Series of Sixteen Etchings of Scenes on the Thames and Other Subjects (the Thames Set)
9 3/4 × 6 1/2 inches (24.9 × 17.2 cm); sheet 14 1/8 × 8 7/8 inches (36 × 22.5 cm)


Using an upright format, Whistler shows the Thames from the shore, leading the eye through a succession of timber buildings to a small vignette of the river and the opposite bank, placed just left of center. The premises of William Jones & Co were at 241 and 242 Wapping High Street, a few doors from the sites of Thames Police and Eagle Wharf. Although this work is widely known as ‘The Lime-Burner’, the first title, used when it was shown at the Royal Academy of Arts the summer after it was made, was W. Jones, Lime-burner, Thames Street. This demonstrates Whistler to be a committed Realist, choosing a subject from modern life and specifically identifying the workingman in the picture.

After its first showing at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1860 (943), it was exhibited in The Works of James Whistler – Etchings and Dry Points at E. Thomas’s print shop, 39 Old Bond Street in 1861. The subject was published in A Series of Sixteen Etchings of Scenes on the Thames and Other Subjects, (the Thames Set) (No 9). The plate was sold by F. Keppel & Co to Charles Lang Freer in 1896 and is now in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art.
In the quiet of night, the palaces reflect the light of the moon and a lantern adjacent to the edge of one of the buildings, in the centre of the composition, shines across a canal. On the left, balconies cast deep shadows over the façade but the doorways, walls and windows are only indicated with a few lines. The stillness of the water adds to the sense of mystery, and the artist’s manipulation of the ink on the surface of the plate provides the dramatic structure of the scene.

In Venice Whistler restored his reputation, after the humiliation of bankruptcy, with a series of prints, commissioned by The Fine Art Society, which stand as one of the greatest achievements in the history of printmaking. Of the fifty etchings he made there, this and the horizontal Nocturne, a view of the entrance to the Guidecca Canal from the Riva degli Schiavoni, are perhaps the most memorable. The artist made his first night piece in 1858 and it was his painting of another night scene which was the subject of Ruskin’s review, which in turn precipitated Whistler’s ruin.

Nocturne: Palaces was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in the exhibition ‘Arrangement in White and Yellow’, 1883 No.12. The edition of 42 was printed in 1886-87 and published by Messrs Dowdeswell and Thibaudeau in the Second Venice Set: 54 impressions in all are known. The site has never been identified.
Only two other impressions of The Rialto in the first state are recorded, which are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Freer Gallery of Art respectively. It is a view of one of the most famous and popular landmarks in Venice, the Rialto Bridge over the Grand Canal. The artist’s vantage point has been identified as a first floor window above the Sottoportico Pirieta in the Campo San Bartolomeo, San Marco.

The pencil signature of a large butterfly with veined wings would also indicate that this is an early printing of the print, which was first exhibited at The Fine Art Society in 1883 in 'Arrangement in White and Yellow' (No 41). It was subsequently published by Messrs Dowdeswell and Thibaudeau in A Set of Twenty-six Etchings, the Second Venice Set, in 1886 in an edition of 42.

**JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER**

1834-1903

51 The Rialto, 1879-80

Etching and drypoint, signed in pencil with an elaborate shaded butterfly, and inscribed imp., printed in black ink on laid paper, trimmed to the platemark, leaving a signature tab, in the first state (of three) 11 1/8 x 8 inches (29.9 x 20.2 cm)

PROVENANCE: Albert W. Scholle [Lugt 2943A]; Harris G. Whittemore [L.1334A]; stamps verso


PROVENANCE: Albert W. Scholle [Lugt 2943A]; Harris G. Whittemore [L.1334A]; stamps verso

The Embroidered Curtain is probably the best known of the Amsterdam etchings. It contains the elements which exemplify these works. It is a frontal view which shows the façade of late 17th century buildings at 52-54 Palmgracht in the Jordaan district, which no longer exists. In 1895 the canal was filled in and later the houses pulled down and replaced. The shape of the plate presents a tight view of the houses, showing two storeys, the cobbled street in front and the waters of the canal where Whistler must have sat in a boat. A number of figures, adults and children, stand in the doorways and play in the street. A woman bends over a bucket in one doorway, squeezing out a cloth. The shop on the left offers ‘Water and Fire’ for sale, a bucket of water or a few glowing coals. Behind the large window in the next-door building hangs the embroidered curtain of the title.

Although Whistler used different lines and marks over the surface of the plate, distinguishing brick from stone and glass from water, they are woven together. The space between the viewpoint and the buildings is flattened in the design. The same sensibility which carefully drew the brickwork of the house in Black Lion Wharf thirty years earlier, and indicated the waters of Venetian canals a decade before, combines these effects in a new technique.

The Embroidered Curtain was first exhibited at Dunthorne’s Gallery, London in 1890, but it, and the Amsterdam Set itself, was never published. The print-run is uncertain: in one studio stock-taking 24 impressions were recorded. The Glasgow University catalogue records 27.