

French Market Scene

Grenville Irwin

Sold



REF: 1838

Height: 56 cm (22")

Width: 66.5 cm (26.2")

Description

Greville Irwin

Harry Greville Wood Irwin RBA (1893-1947)

Although he was a professional painter who exhibited widely at the principal public art institutions, little is known or recorded of Greville Irwin's life. He was born in 1893 or 1894 and studied art in Paris at the Académie Julian and later in 1926 at the Academie des Beaux Arts in Brussels. He spent some time in Brittany before the Great War and although we are not aware of any war service his age would indicate that a spell in the trenches was highly likely. It is possible that he was in fact the Lieutenant H G W Irwin of the 2nd South Lancashires who was wounded by shrapnel and later taken prisoner at the Battle of Mons. A source describes his life as blighted by a war wound in the spine that left him paralysed for the rest of his life.

In the interwar years his career blossomed and despite his disability he painted and exhibited prolifically, successfully showing at the Royal Academy, the Royal Glasgow Institute, the New English Art Club and both the Royal Institutes but principally, 86 works, at the Royal Society of British Artists where he was an elected member. His exhibited works were testament to his travels, scenes of Mevagissey and Polperro in Cornwall, Concarneau in Brittany and of course Paris and London abounded. He developed, possibly as an ex-military man, a speciality for recording historical martial events. Events covered included most of the significant Royal occasions of the 1930s from the funeral of Admiral Earl Beatty to the King's Silver Jubilee of 1935.

His depiction of these occasions provide a deliciously atmospheric snapshot of the pomp and ceremony of each event. Much like his contemporary Paul Maze he seems to have been granted ringside access to each procession and perfectly captures candid off duty moments amongst the participants.

Irwin lived variously in Ewell in Surrey, London and Leamington Spa where he was seconded to the local camouflage unit in Warwickshire during the Second World War. Throughout his career he spent sporadic intervals at the artists' colony in St Ives where he took a studio finally in 1946. It was here, tragically, a year later that Irwin took his own life after a bout of depression.