

JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

A Fisherman's Catch

WILLIAM GEDDES

Sold



REF: 374772

Height: 48 cm (18.9")

Width: 79.3 cm (31.2")

Framed Height: 58.8 cm (23.1")

Framed Width: 92 cm (36.2")

Description

WILLIAM GEDDES

Scottish School

1841-1884

Oil on canvas, laid on to panel, signed and dated 1877

The Scottish painter William Geddes was born in the east Perthshire town of Blairgowrie in 1841, the son of the stone mason William and Agnes (née Ross) Geddes. He attended the local school and then trained as a house painter and decorator, serving his apprenticeship in 1853 with G M Dickson on a salary of two shillings a week.

When his apprenticeship was completed, he moved to Edinburgh which was close to his brother who was a merchant in Leith and although William is regarded as a self-taught artist, it is possible that he had some artistic instruction while in the capital. It was in Edinburgh that he met Margaret Ewan and in 1864 they were married and he returned to Blairgowrie with his new wife and lived in Rory Street in the family home before setting up their first home together at Riverside House in Rattray. In 1874 they moved to Gowanbrae Cottage and William spent the rest of his life there. He converted some of the outhouses at Gowanbrae Cottage into a studio and also maintained a large fish tank in the garden, the better to study them closely, which enabled his acute and meticulous painted observations of fish. He kept a pet monkey as well.

Geddes became the central figure of a group of artists based in and around the town who became known as the "Blairgowrie Boys" and although this band was small and confined to the local environs, its reputation spread and, as a consequence, other artists were drawn to the town.

He had clearly determined to follow a career in painting for he exhibited his first picture at the Royal Scottish Academy in 1865 and continued to show his paintings there, with the exception of 1881, until his death in 1884. During that period he exhibited forty-four works at the RSA with titles that included: Trout from the Lorne, Cock and hen salmon on a bank with a rod and reel nearby, Boys guddin for trout, Basket of trout, The haunt of the wild duck, The sportsman's daughter preparing dinner, Home with his "take", The village auction, Where stream and river meet, Winter landscape with skaters and The children's war. He was a member of the Scottish Arts Club and also showed seven paintings at the Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts between 1861 and 1884.

These examples show that his subject matter included not only piscatorial studies but also landscape and portraiture and genre and it was the latter which formed the substantial part of his earlier work. He painted portraits of his wife and children but also commissions such as Thomas Lamb, his wife and family on the lawn at Brewhead House, Birkhill. He used his friends and family as models for these figure subjects and there was no shortage of sitters for his paintings of children because he had eleven of his own. Two of these, Ewan (1866-1936) and Robert Smith Geddes (1883-1951), became artists. Ewan painted rural scenes and landscapes chiefly in watercolour and was elected a member of the Royal Watercolour Society and had use of his father's studio after the latter's death. Robert abandoned his career and emigrated to Canada even though Ewan apparently regarded him as the mor...