JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

"Fireworks at the Serpentine, London, January 16th 1861"

JOHN WRIGHT OAKES

Sold

London, England

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REF: 155278

Description

JOHN WRIGHT OAKES A.R.A., H.R.S.A. 1820-1887English School“Fireworks at the Serpentine, London, January 16th 1861” Oil on canvas, signed and dated and indistinctly signed, inscribed and dated on label on reverse35.5 x 61 cms14 x 24 inchesOverall framed size 49.5 x 75 cms 19½ x 29½ ins
John Wright Oakes was an interesting painter who was part of the Liverpool Pre-Raphaelite movement, producing landscapes in their own particular style. The largest concentration of Pre-Raphaelite landscape painters evolved in Liverpool, largely as a consequence of Pre-Raphaelite paintings having been awarded prizes at the local Academy. These pictures had had a significant influence on many Lancashire artists and the consequence was that it spawned a group of fine landscape painters imbued with the Brotherhood's attention for detail and included such artists, apart from J W Oakes, as William Davis, Frederick Clive Newcombe, William J C Bond, John Henry Newton and Henry Mark Anthony. In 1862 William Michael Rossetti included Oakes in a list of Pre-Raphaelite landscape painters with the aforementioned Davis together with John Brett, John William Inchbold and George Price Boyce

Oakes had been born at Sproston House, near Middlewich, Cheshire on 9th July 1820. This house had been in his family for several generations and he went to Liverpool for his education followed by his artistic training at the school attached to the Liverpool Mechanics' Institution under the instruction of John Bishop. He began exhibiting at the Liverpool Academy from 1839 and these early works were often still-lifes of fruit and it was from about 1843 that he made the significant change to landscape, painting them from nature.

He sent his first painting to be exhibited in London in 1847, to the British Institution, a work entitled "Nant Frangon" and a year later, "On the River Greta, Keswick" was his first exhibit at the Royal Academy. He continued to show his work at the R.A. and by the late 1850s, he was receiving favourable reviews of his these exhibits and John Ruskin's enthusiasm when writing in "Academy Notes", had established for him a reputation in the capital before he relocated there in 1859.

The move to London further augmented his standing and his paintings became much sought after. Besides his B.I. and R.A. exhibits, he was also showing at the Royal Society of British Artists, Portland Gallery and Dudley Gallery. His subject matter, although initially being predominantly of the Liverpool environs and Welsh mountain and coastal views, eventually was spread widely throughout Britain as well as parts of Switzerland. In London, he joined the private exhibiting society the Hogarth Club which was exclusively for those working in the Pre-Raphaelite discipline.

The enthusiasm for Pre-Raphaelite paintings began to wane in the 1860s and Oakes adapted his style, rather in the way that Benjamin Williams Leader, John Brett, Sidney Richard Percy, John Mulcaster Carrick, John Samuel Raven and others had done, away from such an overtly detailed depict...

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