Myles Birket Foster, RWS (1825 - 1899)

Warks Burn, Northumberland

Signed with monogram, lower left: *BF*; also signed, inscribed and numbered on a label attached to the backboard: *Birket Foster/no.2 Wark's Burn, Northumberland*

Pencil, watercolour and bodycolour on paper

17½ x 35¼ in – 44.5 x 89.5 cm

Frame size

24¾ x 42¾ in – 62.9 x 108.6 cm

£39,000

Provenance:

with Agnew's, Manchester;
Abraham Haworth, Hilston House, Bowden;
Thence by descent

Exhibitions

Probably London, The Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours, *Summer Exhibition*, 1861, no.7;

Manchester, *Royal Jubilee Exhibition*, 1887, no.1296;

Probably Nottingham Castle, *Pictures of the British School in Oil and Watercolours*, 1896, no.109

Literature:

The Art Journal, 1861, p.174;

J. Reynolds, *Birket Foster*, London, 1984, p.77

Artist description:

Myles Birket Foster was born in North Shields, 4th February 1825, the youngest but one of seven children, to a Quaker family that moved to London in 1830. Apprenticed first to Ebenezer Landells, a wood engraver, he left to set up by himself in 1846 and worked as a book illustrator for “Vizetelly”. In

1852-54 he was sent to the Rhine to make drawings for “The Rhine and its Pictorial Scenery”, published in 1856, and “The Upper Rhine”, published in 1857. It was the successful sale at auction of these drawings in 1861 that helped establish Foster’s reputation as a painter. In 1866 and 1868 Foster travelled to Venice, producing a series of views of the city and also paintings of the Italian lakes

Foster moved to Whitley in 1861 where his house, “The Hill”, contained works by Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Rossetti and William Morris, and a group of watercolours by J.M.W. Turner. He had two studios, one for oils, of which he exhibited thirteen at the Royal Academy between 1869 to 1881, the other for watercolours, of which three hundred and thirty-two were exhibited at the Royal Watercolour Society, having been elected an associate of the old Watercolour Society in 1860, and a member in 1862.

However, Foster is best known for his work following his move to Whitley, scenes of rustic genre, featuring children in idyllic landscapes, or before half-timbered country cottages, scenes extolling the beauty and charm of rural life, painted in a distinctive, stippled technique.

His works can be found in museums in: Aberdeen; Birmingham; Glasgow; Manchester and London, Victoria and Albert Museum, which also contains a number of documents relating to him.