Helen Layfield Bradley (1900 - 1979)

'Oh, just look', said Mother
One of a pair with "Ah, dear Emily"

"'Oh, just look', said Mother"

Signed and with a fly insignia, lower right: *HELEN BRADLEY*;

inscribed on a label attached to the reverse:

12 x 9¾ in – 30.5 x 24.7 cm

Frame size

16¾ x 14½ in – 42.5 x 36.8 cm

Inscribed on artist's label on reverse:

'Oh, just look', said Mother. 'If that isn't Mr Taylor (the Bank Manager) with Miss Carter (who wore pink) and they've met Dear Emily'. 'Oh' said Aunt Mary, 'Just look howhe's holding her hand'. 'Oh my', said Aunt Frances, 'Look howpink she's gone', 'I wonder what he's said', 'Oh', said Mother, 'Just look at Miss Carter, we shan't half have a time with her going home, we must all pretend we haven't seen anything'. 'I wonder if he's beginning to change his mind, but he can never marry Dear Emily, she promised her Father that she would never leave her Mother'. 'Isn't it a pity, she's so sweet', and the year was 1908.

Artist description:

Helen Bradley was born in Lees, a village outside the industrial cotton town of Oldham. She was born just prior to the Edwardian era, a golden age, when Britain was the envy of the world, a confident wealthy superpower.

She began to paint only in her sixties in order to show her young granddaughter what life was like when she herself was a child. It was a time of prosperity and the extended family and her 'naïve' narrative paintings reflect this. Her works are documents of social history, always accompanied by a detailed description (see above), recording social conventions, costume, lifestyle, and portraying the growing urban sprawl. Whether she portrays an outing to Blackpool, a trip to Manchester, a day at the fair or carol singing in the snow, her paintings are full of familiar characters, Miss Carter, who always wore pink, the Aunts, and Mr Taylor the Bank Manager. Many of her works are illustrated in a series of autobiographical books, the first of which is "And Miss Carter Wore Pink, Scenes from an Edwardian Childhood", published Jonathan Cape, London 1971. Bradley's work was much admired by L. S. Lowry (1887-1976) and can be compared to that of the American artist, a contemporary, Grandma Moses (1860-1961).

Her works can be found in museums in: Oldham; Saddleworth and Salford.