



MACCONNAL - MASON

ESTABLISHED 1893



Sir Cedric Morris (1889 - 1982)

Surrealist Landscape

On the reverse, a keeper's cottage, Wales

Oil on canvas

20 x 24 in – 50.8 x 61 cm

Frame size

26¾ x 30¾ in – 67.9 x 78.1 cm

Artist description:

Cedric Morris was born 11th December 1889, the eldest son of Sir George Lockwood Morris, 8th Baronet, at Sketty in Glamorganshire, South Wales. He was educated at Charterhouse following which he farmed in Canada and then Wales.

In 1913 he decided to pursue a career as a painter, studying in Paris. On the outbreak of war he served in the army, 1914-15 in the ranks and then in the Remounts working with horses under the artist Cecil Aldin (1870-1935).

In 1918 he returned to art joining his partner Arthur Lett-Haines (1894-1978) a fellow artist, in Chelsea. Morris returned briefly to Newlyn in Cornwall where he had spent 1918 sketching before he and Lett-Haines based themselves in Paris 1921-27. Here they mixed with the expatriate artistic community while also travelling extensively through France, Spain and Italy. In 1922, Morris and Lett-Haines held solo exhibitions in Rome.

Returning to London in the late 1920's Morris joined the London Group and was proposed by Ben Nicholson (1894-1982) for membership of the Seven and Five Society.

However, though retaining a studio in London, Morris and Lett-Haines moved to Colchester when he worked at Pound Farm founding the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing in 1935, based in Higham and from 1940 at his home in Benton End, Hadleigh, Suffolk.

The EASPD at Benton End was a liberal and unconventional art school in which discussion and the surrounding gardens played as significant a part as teaching. A renowned plantsman and gardener, Morris was as unconventional as he was as a teacher, his planting veered towards the natural rather than the uniform ordered style, then in vogue. Numerous students left Benton End with this philosophy in both painting and gardening, and a love of the Mediterranean cuisine at which Lett-Haines, a friend of Elizabeth David, was so accomplished.

Among the many students who studied with Morris in London and East Anglia was Lucian Freud (1922-2011), a portrait of whom dating from 1941 by Cedric Morris is in the Tate. Morris was President of the South Wales Art Society and was on several occasions invited to become an Associate of the Royal Academy, which he refused. He was a founder member of the Colchester Art Society along with his friend and fellow plantsman, John Nash (1893-1977)

As a plantsman, Morris was widely respected as a breeder of irises; he was a countryman with an extraordinary affinity with nature, who decried intensive farming and the overuse of pesticides, beliefs reflected in a number of his paintings.

A painter in oils and watercolours of landscape, still life, flower studies and portraiture, Morris was a leading and influential 20th century painter. He rejected abstraction and retained a style of his own throughout his career. He was a keen and knowledgeable horticulturalist, a passion evident in his flower paintings.

Morris, having inherited the Baronetcy in 1947, died in 1982.

His works can be found in museums in: Belfast, Ulster Museum; Cardiff, The National Museum of Wales; London, Tate Britain; New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Melbourne, The National Gallery of Art and public collections in Aberdeen, Aberystwyth, Bradford, Chichester, Colchester, Eastbourne, Hull, Manchester, Norwich, Oldham, Southampton and Swansea.