SARAH COLEGRAVE
FINE ART

## Nathaniel Sparks - The Strand Entrance to Somerset House

Nathaniel Sparks

£1,600



REF: 3247

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Description

NATHANIEL SPARKS(1880-1956)
The Strand Entrance to Somerset House, London
Signed l.r.: Nataniel SparksWatercolourFramed
35 by 52 cm.; 13 ¾ by 20 ½ in.(frame size 54.5 by 71.5 cm., 21 ½ by 28 ¼ in.)
Nathaniel Sparks was born in Bristol, a cousin of the writer, Thomas Hardy. He studied at Bristol College of Art before winning a scholarship to the Royal College of Art in 1900. Whilst still a student, he was commissioned by Whistler to help in the printing of his Venice etchings. In addition to his work in watercolours he was a prominent printmaker, becoming a member of the Royal Institute of Painter-Etchers and Engravers in 1910. He exhibited at the Royal Academy; Chenil Gallery; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; Paris Salon and in Venice. His studio was destroyed by a bomb at the beginning of World War II and he left London, retiring to the live for the rest of his life in Somerset. A Centenary Exhibition of his work was held at the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester in 1980.
The present Somerset House is a large neoclassical building complex between the Strand and the River Thames and was built on the site of a Tudor palace that had originally belonged to the Duke of Somerset. Designed by Sir William Chambers, work started in 1776. Originally intended to be a grand public building housing various government and public offices it is now occupied by a variety of organisations which are mainly centred around the arts and education.
Nathaniel Sparks' watercolour depicts the great entrance arch on the Strand. Built in 1780, the design of the north front was based on Inigo Jones's drawings for the riverfront of the former palace. The Courtauld Institute of Art is located in this part of the building and is accessed via this archway.