The Country Wedding

Frank Holl

Sold



REF: 127537

Height: 90.17 cm (35.5")

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Width: 64.77 cm (25.5")

Description

Frank (Francis Montague) Holl was the son of the engraver Francis Holl ARA. He was born in London and educated at University College School before entering the Royal Academy Schools in 1860 where he won silver and gold medals. In 1864 he exhibited A Mother and Child, his first picture at the Royal Academy. Its portrayal of working class poverty reflected his socialist up-bring and his concern with documenting the social issues of the day in his paintings continued throughout his career. In 1868 he won a travel scholarship with The Lord Gave, and the Lord Hath Taken Away, a painting that illustrated a family bereavement. Queen Victoria attempted to buy it but the original purchaser refused to sell it. When Holl later painted another painting on the same theme, No Tidings from the Sea, it was purchased by the Queen for 100 guineas. In 1869 he was recruited as an artist by the engraver and social reformer William Luson Thomas to work on his newly founded newspaper, The Graphic. For the next five years he provided illustrations for the magazine along with other artists who shared his social commitment such as Luke Fildes and Hubert von Herkomer. They often worked their illustrations on into large scale paintings and together they created what became known as the Social Realist Movement. In addition to his modern day social subjects he became an acclaimed portrait painter receiving many commissions and his ceaseless workload may have contributed to his early death in 1888 at the age of forty-three. The present work is the result of a Sketching Club evening meeting. The Sketching Club originally started in Edinburgh in 1855 but many of it’s founding members gradually moved south and the club established itself in London. The evening usually became with tea, when the subject of the sketch would be agreed. They would then allow themselves a time limit of between one and two hours to produce a sketch of the subject. The resulting sketches were then discussed and the evening turned to a more relaxed and sociable event. Many of the sketches done at these evening meetings were worked out later on a large scale and include Holl’s Child’s Funeral (1872, Leeds City Art Gallery). Other members of the club included William Quiller Orchardson, John Pettie, Colin Hunter and George Lawson. After the death of Frank Holl, for many years the secretary of the club, the club gradually dissolved. The first major retrospective exhibition of Holl’s work for over 100 years is to be held at the Watts Gallery, 18 June-3 November 2013.