

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



John Dawson WATSON (Sedbergh 1832 - Conway 1892)

Haystack, Inver, Perthshire

Watercolour on buff paper.

Signed with initials, dated and inscribed J. D. W. / 1859. / Inver Strath Braan. Perth. at the lower left

213 x 214 mm., 8 3/8 x 8 3/8 in. [sheet]

This small watercolour was painted during a trip to Scotland in 1859, at Strathbraan, or the valley of the River Braan, near the village of Inver in Perthshire.

A stylistically comparable work by Watson - a study of the trunk of a birch tree – was formerly in the Oppe collection and is now in Tate Britain.

Provenance:

Robert Fleming & Co., Ltd., London, in c.1985
The Maas Gallery, London
The Fine Art Society, London, in March 2010
Christopher Cone, Whitby.

Artist description:

Born in Yorkshire, John Dawson Watson showed artistic promise at an early age. He studied at the Manchester School of Art from 1847 onwards, and then from 1851 at the Royal Academy in London. In the same year his first exhibited work, entitled *The Wounded Cavalier*, was shown in Manchester. In 1856 he came to the attention of Ford Madox Brown, who invited Watson to exhibit his work at his home in London. Settling in London in 1860, Watson began exhibiting at the Old Water-Colour Society and

the Royal Academy, where he sent works between 1853 and 1890. He was elected an Associate Member of the Society of Painters in Watercolours in 1864, rising to full membership five years later. Between 1859 and 1892 Watson exhibited over 370 works at exhibitions in London, at the Royal Academy, the British Institution, the Grosvenor Gallery and the Society of British Artists.

Watson's oeuvre is made up largely of small oil paintings and highly detailed watercolours of historical and genre scenes, as well as the occasional pastoral subject, executed in a manner strongly influenced by the example of the Pre-Raphaelites. Watson's landscapes were much praised in particular by John Ruskin, while the early 20th century scholar Forrest Reid noted that he 'was a sound draughtsman whose work frequently surprises us by its power and beauty.' Watson also enjoyed a highly successful career as a book and magazine illustrator, notably producing a series of drawings for John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, published in 1861. He also made designs for furniture, medals and theatre costumes. The last years of his career were spent in Conwy in North Wales, where he was engaged on a program of decoration for the Castle Hotel there. A large exhibition of Watson's work was held in Manchester in 1877, and works by the artist are today in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Castle Museum and Art Gallery in Norwich, the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, and elsewhere.