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Forsberg finds peace in the world

Swedish painter's stylised alpine view is one of the highlights of *Master Drawings New York*

by Gabriel Berner

"It was the first time I found myself in front of a glacier, alone in the infinite silence and solitude of the snow mountain, surrounded by the overwhelming majesty of nature..."

Swedish open-air painter Carl Johan Forsberg (1867-1938) wrote this after painting the highly stylised alpine view, shown above, of the Rhône Glacier in the Swiss Alps. Titled *Pax*, it was regarded by Forsberg as the 'capo lavoro' of his life, inspired by an on-the-spot sketch made in 1903.

The place heightened his sense of life's fragility, as it was here where the artist and his wife almost lost their lives when their horse-drawn carriage nearly plunged into the raging Rhône river during a thunderstorm. Barely noticeable, seated on a small island at the left, is the tiny figure of Death with his scythe.

Priced at £50,000, the watercolour gouache features in an exhibition of 19th and 20th century landscapes by London gallery **Stephen Ongpin Fine Art**, which forms part of the latest edition of *Master Drawings New York* (MDNY), the veteran dealer event held annually in the Upper East side of Manhattan.

"At a time when many of us have been asked to remain indoors, we have chosen to present a catalogue and exhibition dedicated exclusively to landscapes, in lieu of our usual *Master Drawings* presentation, with the hope that it will offer respite and

Works on offer at *Master Drawings New York*

1. *Pax* by Carl Johan Forsberg – **£50,000** from **Stephen Ongpin Fine Art**.

2. *Wooded landscape with track and pool* by Thomas Gainsborough – **\$25,000** from **Karen Taylor Fine Art**.

3. *A town with windmills seen from a distance* by Jan van Goyen (1596-1656) – **\$20,000** from Mireille Mosler.

a reminder of what lies beyond our walls," said Ongpin.

Aptly named *A Sense of Place*, it takes place at New York gallery **Adam Williams Fine Art** and includes 70 landscape drawings, watercolours and oil sketches dating from c.1820-1960 spanning movements from the Barbizon School to Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and beyond.

Big Apple action

A total of 18 dealers will host online exhibitions as part of *MDNY*, which goes live to the public on January 22, timed as usual to coincide with the major January/February auctions of Old Master paintings and drawings in the Big Apple. Though primarily digital this year, *MDNY* hopes to retain a remnant of its physical event with a select number of dealers in New York 'open by appointment' throughout the week (around 10 as *ATG* went to press).

The great outdoors has inspired

other dealer exhibitions planned for the latest edition. London dealership **Karen Taylor Fine Art** holds a show of 18th and 19th century works on paper that examines 'the world of the imagination of British artists influenced by the picturesque movement and the progression into the romanticism of the 19th century'.

Included in *Romantic Landscape and the Picturesque Imagination*, priced at \$25,000, is a black chalk drawing of a wooded landscape by Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88), dated to the mid-1780s.

As with Forsberg, Gainsborough's first love was landscape painting, famously writing in a letter to a friend: "I'm sick of portraits and wish very much to take my viol da gamba and walk off to some sweet village where I can paint landscapes and enjoy the fag end of life in quietness and ease."

Pages from a sketchbook by Jan van Goyen (1596-1656), one of

the main pioneers of naturalistic landscape in early 17th century Holland, is the focus of an exhibit at New York gallery **Mireille Mosler**.

The artist travelled the length and breadth of the Netherlands to record 'when inspiration struck' landscape and topography in small notebooks. Back in his studio, he used his travel sketches to create imaginative landscapes in paint and pen.

The show contains around 30 drawings in black chalk and grey from the now dispersed sketchbook which Van Goyen filled in 1650-52 when he was in his mid-50s. The gallery said the relatively late work presents a "different view on the end of a studio practice towards the end of a prolific career when relatively few paintings were produced".

A diminutive and delicate black chalk sketch of a town with windmills is priced at \$20,000.

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