Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Frank Wasley (1854 - 1930)

Night Scene, Venice

Charcoal, pastel and gouache.
Signed, dated and inscribed Pastel / Night Scene Venice / FWasley 1927 on the backing board.
359 x 190 mm. (14 1/8 x 7 1/2 in.)

Frank Wasley was particularly admired as a draughtsman; as one contemporary critic noted, 'his work is distinguished by a verve and vigour that are truly remarkable.' He began working in charcoal around 1894 and, as the same critic wrote, the artist 'at once found that it was the medium which exactly suited his peculiar temperament. Impressionable in the extreme, given to sudden and fleeting inspirations, our artist found paints and brushes slow of preparation and use compared to the handy sheet of paper and stick of charcoal. So that, although Mr. Wasley works with distinction in water-colours and other mediums, it is evident that charcoal is his favourite, and the one that gives the clearest reflection of the poetic and sentimental phases of his mind…His technique is singularly free from monotony, and an added interest is lent to his drawings by the evidently varied treatment of the medium in the rendering of the different textures and surfaces depicted. His composition is almost invariably excellent.'

A similar nighttime scene of Venice by Wasley appeared at auction in London in 2003.

Artist description:

Born in Peckham in south London, Frank Wasley was a painter, watercolourist and draughtsman who specialized in coastal landscapes, marine subjects and seascapes, with a particular penchant for atmospheric views of Venice. Trained as a musician, he only took up painting and drawing around 1875, without the benefit of any formal artistic education. A great admirer of Turner, Wasley was mainly active between 1880 and 1914, exhibiting at the Royal Academy and in various provincial galleries. One of his first exhibited works, Evening on the Esk, was purchased by the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool.