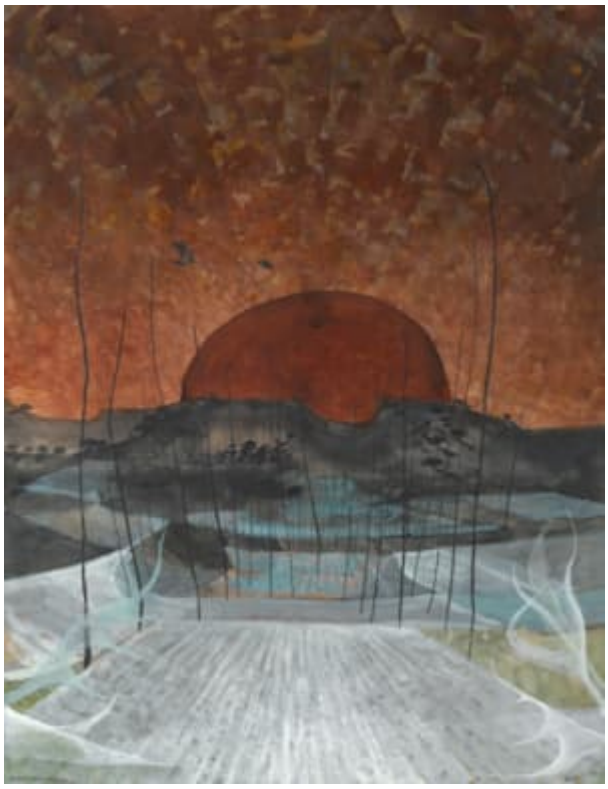


Alan Reynolds (Born 1926)

Sunset, Kent

Watercolour and gouache on paper.

Signed, dated and dedicated For Robert and Lillian with love / Alan [?]. / 1957. at the lower left.

Further signed and dated Reynolds. 57. at the lower right.

Titled “Sunset Kent.” on the verso.

629 x 486 mm. (24 3/4 x 19 1/8 in.)

This large watercolour was presented by the artist in 1957 to the prominent art critic and journalist Robert Melville (1905-1986). Melville, who wrote exhibition reviews for the fortnightly magazine Art News and Review, had noticed Reynolds’s work since his earliest public exhibitions. In 1955, Melville wrote of Reynolds’s landscapes that ‘If we are regaining confidence in the future of the most rewarding tradition in English art, it is thanks to the immense promise of his work and the evidence of his already remarkable development.’

As Melville wrote in the catalogue introduction for Reynolds’s fourth one-man show, entitled The Four Seasons, held at the Redfern Gallery in June 1956, ‘Alan Reynolds is the only painter I know who has succeeded in conveying to us his sense of a scale stretched far beyond the limits of sight through the medium of visionary landscapes which remain in close correspondence with the appearance of the natural scene.’

Provenance:

Given by the artist to Robert and Lillian Melville, London, in 1957
Agnew's, London
Private collection, since the 1980's.

Literature:

Gill Hedley, 'Dr Toothpaste and Dr No: Robert Melville and Francis Bacon', Bacon Review, No.1, 2023, illustrated p.61.

Artist description:

Born in Newmarket in Suffolk, Alan Reynolds left school at the age of fourteen, and began drawing and painting at about this time. He received little formal artistic training, however, until leaving the Army in 1947, when he enrolled at the Woolwich Polytechnic School of Art. His work was included, as a non-member, in the London Group exhibitions of 1950 and 1951 and, while still enrolled at art school, the work of the young Reynolds was included in three exhibitions at the Redfern Gallery in London. The same year he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art, where among his fellow students were Frank Auerbach, Bridget Riley, Peter Blake and Leon Kossoff. Although Reynolds received the Painting Medal in his first year, he did not remain at the RCA for long. In 1952 he exhibited twenty-four small paintings in his first one-man show at the Redfern Gallery, followed a year later by a second show at the Redfern and, in 1954, at the Durlacher Gallery in New York.

Reynolds achieved almost instant success as a landscape painter, with the sale of nearly all of the paintings, drawings and watercolours he exhibited at the Redfern; indeed, by the time he was thirty his paintings had been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the National Gallery of South Australia, and the Tate, among other institutions. In later years Reynolds taught drawing at the Central School of Arts and Crafts and painting at the Saint Martin's School of Art, both in London. In 1958, however, Reynolds largely abandoned drawing from nature, and began moving away from landscape painting in favour of a new interest in abstraction. A decade or so later, he gave up painting entirely, and began working on constructed white reliefs. These have made up the bulk of his output since, along with woodcuts and tonal drawings. Reynolds's work is represented in several museums in the UK, America, Canada and Australia.