

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**Arthur Charles Kemp (1906 - 1968)**

**Red Sky over Loch Harray, Orkney**

Watercolour. Numbered AK 192 on the verso. 191 x 279 mm. (7 1/2 x 11 in.)

The present sheet was one of a series of sky studies painted by Kemp during his family's summer holidays in 1961, when the artist, his wife and son were staying in a cottage in Skeabrae in the Orkney Islands, and father and son rowed across the Loch of Harray. As his son recalled many years later, '1961 saw more improvement in Dad and for the first time ever the three of us went away for a holiday to the Orkney Islands. I had hired a rowing boat and Dad and I would go off together where he would be quite content to sit and sketch while I did a spot of fishing. Other days we would go off around the headlands and find a suitable subject to paint. I remember one day the wind was so strong that I had to hold the paper down on his board for him to paint or the lot would have been blown away to sea. He still had no use of his left arm and could not walk very well. His speech was affected as well so things were not at all easy for him but we all seemed to manage reasonably well.'

A related, more finished, sky study is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art of Wales in Machynlleth in Powys, which houses a large number of paintings by Arthur Kemp.

**Provenance:**

By descent in the family of the artist to his adopted son, Jeremy Raynham-Kemp.

**Artist description:**

Born into a Quaker family, Arthur Kemp had wished to study art but, facing the disapproval of his father, was instead trained as a musician, studying the cello at the Midland Institute in Birmingham. In the mid-1920's he joined the City of Birmingham Orchestra, where he met his future wife. Shortly after their marriage in 1934, Kemp entered the Birmingham School of Art, winning an award for excellence in arts and crafts at his graduation in 1936. He was also qualified as an art teacher, and was thus employed for the next few years, while continuing to work as a painter, as well as a silversmith. In the early 1940's the Kemp family moved from Kings Norton in Worcestershire to the town of Rugby in Warwickshire. Kemp spent much time travelling around Wales, where he would often find subjects to paint, and had a second home at Llanystumdwy, on the river Dwyfach. One of his few public commissions was a very large

mosaic for the Rugby College of Technology, while a second mosaic of The Virgin and Child proposed for the rebuilt Coventry cathedral never progressed beyond preparatory drawings. In 1960 Kemp suffered the second of two strokes, which left him without the full use of his left arm, though he continued to draw and sketch as often as possible.