Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Ernest Stephen Lumsden (1883 - 1948)

Northern Twilight

Oil on canvas, laid down on board.

236 x 327 mm. (9 1/4 x 12 7/8 in.)

Provenance:

The Fine Art Society, London, in May 1984
Mr. and Mrs. Giorgio Marsan, London.

Artist description:

A gifted printmaker and painter, Ernest Lumsden was largely self-taught as an etcher, learning the craft from the technical guide written by the 19th century French printmaker Maxime Lalanne. He soon became adept in the medium and established a considerable reputation as a printmaker. His earliest work as an etcher dates to 1902, when the young artist was living in Paris and studying at the Atelier Julian. In 1906 six of his etchings were exhibited at the Society of Painters and Gravers and the following year two more were shown at the Salon in Paris. By 1908 he had settled in Edinburgh, where he took up a position at the Edinburgh College of Art, but his wanderlust led him the following year to British Columbia in Canada. From there he travelled on to Japan and Korea, and thence to Beijing and on to Burma. It was in India, however, that Lumsden found scenes and subjects that truly captivated him, and he produced a number of etched views of the cities of Benares, Jaipur and Udaipur. He was to make several trips to India, visiting Jodhpur, Kashmir and Ladak and often returning to Benares. He also spent some time travelling throughout Spain. In 1914 Lumsden was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers, and in 1924 he published The Art of Etching, which remains a standard work on the subject. As well as landscapes, Lumsden also etched a number of portraits of friends and fellow artists, among them Frank Brangwyn, Augustus John, Edmund Blampied and James McBey.

The 1920's found both Lumsden living in Edinburgh earning a comfortable living from his work, selling his prints through his dealers Colnaghi's in London. An exhibition of his work at Taylor and Brown's Galleries in Edinburgh in March 1920 included not only the etchings for which he was becoming very well known, but also a number of drawings and oil paintings. With the decline in the market for etchings in the later 1920's, however, Lumsden began working more as a painter and was elected an associate member of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1923, becoming a full member ten years later. Having moved to Sir Henry Raeburn's old studio in Edinburgh's Queen Street in 1927, he worked primarily as a

portrait painter, and became curator of the Royal Scottish Academy library in 1935. In November 1935 he showed a number of paintings, including seascapes and other Berwickshire views, as part of an exhibition of the work of a group of eight artists at the New Gallery in Edinburgh. Crippled by arthritis in his later years, Lumsden produced relatively little work in the 1940's before his death in 1948, at the age of sixty-four.

Works by Lumsden are in the collections of the Tate, the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and elsewhere.