

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**David R. THOMAS (London 1916 - London 1990)**

## **From Saint Bride's**

Watercolour and gouache, over a pencil underdrawing, with framing lines in pencil.

Titled, signed and dated FROM SAINT BRIDES / DAVID THOMAS / AD.1960. at the lower right.

426 x 642 mm. (16 3/4 x 25 1/4 in.) [image]

489 x 682 mm. (19 1/4 x 26 7/8 in.) [sheet]

The collection of the Guildhall Art Gallery in London includes David Thomas's largest work, a sixteen-foot wide view of London from the Top of the Shell Centre, painted in 1968. Other views of the city by Thomas are today in the Government Art Collection in London, which holds two paintings and three drawings by the artist.

This very large and impressive view of the City of London, looking towards St. Paul's Cathedral, was taken from the spire of the church of St. Bride's on Fleet Street. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren in 1672, the church boasted one of the tallest church spires in London, rising to a height of 69 metres.

Gutted by fire during the Blitz in December 1940, St. Bride's was rebuilt during the 1950s and rededicated in December 1957. This view of London, drawn by David Thomas in 1960, was therefore executed less than three years after the church was reopened.

A large watercolour by David Thomas of Waterloo Bridge and the Thames from St. Bride's was acquired by the Government Art Collection from the artist in 1977.

## **Artist description:**

David Thomas was born in London in 1916 and studied at the Chelsea School of Art in 1931. He worked as a waiter in Covent Garden before embarking on a series of adventures that found him working as a pavement artist in London and Paris and travelling around the world on a tramp steamer, before being shipwrecked off Cape Town in South Africa. He also undertook four further voyages by sea as a member of the ship's orchestra on P & O ships. Following service in the Royal Artillery during the Second World War, Thomas returned to art school for a further four years, and in later years showed regularly at the Summer Exhibitions at the Royal Academy. Active as a topographical artist, Thomas painted views of London, Rome, Venice and Istanbul.

In 1981 Thomas travelled to Israel under the patronage of the art collector and stockbroker Edgar Astaire. There he painted views of Jerusalem based on the 19th century lithographs of the city by David Roberts; the twenty paintings he produced during this stay were exhibited, alongside the lithographic

prints by Roberts that inspired them, at the Ben Uri Art Gallery in London in 1982. The following year, an exhibition of Thomas's work was mounted at the Guildhall Art Gallery in London.