

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Keith VAUGHAN (Selsey 1912 - London 1977)

Stacking Hay

Pale brown ink and brown wash, on a page from a sketchbook.

Signed with the artist's initials KV. at the lower right.

Dated 1942 at the lower left.

126 x 173 mm. (5 x 6 3/4 in.) [sheet]

While serving in the NCC during the Second World War, since there was a limited range of media that could be carried in a regulation army knapsack, Keith Vaughan became adept at expressing himself through the graphic mediums of ink, crayon and gouache. Dated 1942, the present sheet is a page from one of the many small sketchbooks that Vaughan filled with figure, landscape and compositional studies in pen and ink during this period. In the summer of that year the artist was stationed at a barracks in Codford in Wiltshire, near Ashton Gifford House, where he and his fellow soldiers were tasked with clearing the overgrown grounds. The early 1940s found Vaughan executing numerous drawings of his surroundings, the barracks and fellow soldiers and labourers, some in sketchbooks and some – known as the 'Army Drawings' - on much larger paper and typically filled out with gouache. Among his finished works of this period is a watercolour of The Wall at Ashton Gifford, today in the collection of the Manchester Art Gallery.

Artist description:

Born in Sussex, Keith Vaughan moved with his family to North London around the start of the First World War. He showed a gift for the arts from a very young age, earning a Royal Drawing Society certificate at the age of just seven years old, but remained for the most part self-taught. While at boarding school, Vaughan was given special entitlements to study art, since he was the first student to specialize in it, and it was at the Christ's Hospital school that he mounted his first exhibition of landscapes. At the age of nineteen, Vaughan began work as a trainee in the art department of the advertising firm Lintas, where he remained until just before the start of the Second World War. In 1939 he left the firm and moved to the country, intending to paint for a year; this would be the first consistent time Vaughan would spend as a fine artist since his school days. During the Second World War, Vaughan declared himself a conscientious objector, and was conscripted into the Non-Combatant Corps (NCC). It was during the war that Vaughan came into contact with such contemporaries such as Graham Sutherland and John

Minton, both of whom were highly influential on the artist's developing career. It was also during this time that Vaughan began exhibiting his work, first in 1943 in a group exhibition of War Artists organized by Kenneth Clark at the National Gallery in London, followed by a solo show of gouaches and drawings at the Alex Reid & Lefevre Gallery in London the following year.

In 1946 Vaughan held his first exhibition of paintings at the Reid & Lefevre Gallery, and the same year moved into a house and studio with Minton, working closely alongside him for the next six years. The artist's postwar style was very different from that of the 1930s, with Vaughan focussing almost entirely on oils and more fully finished compositions, and turning away from the English romanticism of his earlier work. Focussing on the nude male form, Vaughan's work became more and more abstract. In his later years he taught at the Camberwell College of Arts, the Central School of Art and the Slade School. Suffering from cancer, he committed suicide in London in 1977.