Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Carolyn SERGEANT (Wycombe 1937 - Swainshill 2018)

Holly

Oil and red ink on board.

Signed with initials and dated CS.'02. at the lower right.

Signed, dated and titled Carolyn Sergeant. / January 2002. / Holly. on the reverse.

202 x 248 mm. (8 x 9 3/4 in.)

Much of Carolyn Sergeant's source material – the flowers, leaves and twigs that she paints so carefully and with such sensitivity – were gathered on walks through the Welsh valley around her home. Taken back to her studio, they were then painted, always life-size, on boards previously prepared with earth or sky tones.

As one writer has commented of the artist, 'Hers is an art that conceals art; her apparently simple transcriptions of nature are, one senses, the result of extreme self-discipline…she achieves a compelling intensity that enables us to perceive the true nature and beauty of her subjects, however humble the plant. Her objective is not scientific, rather it is the realisation of true plant portraiture, in which her instinct for recognising and defining each plant's idiosyncrasies of structure and habit are fully expressed. One is aware also of a sense of pure delight in recording the often less obvious charms of ordinary plants…Most striking, perhaps, is Carolyn Sergeant's innate sense of design, her mise-en-page, every flower or leaf so precisely placed that we look at each one with individual attention as if examining a precious jewel…Carolyn Sergeant accepts nature as she finds it, with its mixture of severity and tenderness, and allows us to share her particular vision.'

Literature:

London, The Fine Art Society, Carolyn Sergeant. Recent Paintings: 'the harvest of a quiet eye', 2003, no.7.

Artist description:

The botanical and still life painter Alison Margaret Carolyn Cann studied at Wimbledon School of Art from 1955 to 1959 and then, until 1962, at the Royal Academy Schools in London, where she met and later married a fellow student, John Sergeant. She had solo exhibitions of her work in London at the Waterhouse Gallery in 1969 and 1971, and in 1983 she and her husband bought an old farmhouse near the Welsh market town of Builth Wells in Powys, which they renovated over the next several years. John was the driving force behind many important decisions that were to form both their careers. It had been agreed that, while John would continue to pursue his own career as an artist, Carolyn would split her duties between looking after the house and its renovation and raising their two sons Ben and Edward, while continuing to paint at every opportunity. In 1997 she had her first exhibition at the London gallery of Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, which was followed by further shows there in 1999 and 2001. Her work was also included in group exhibitions at the Roland, Browse and Delbanco and the Leicester galleries in London, and in numerous galleries in the provinces. In 2003 she had a solo exhibition at the Fine Art Society and another at Colnaghi in London in 2008. John Sergeant died in 2010 and Carolyn passed away, after a long illness, eight years later.

As Peyton Skipwith has written of her work, 'To say that Carolyn draws and paints flowers, fruit and foliage superbly is to state the obvious; the difficulty is trying to define what makes her work so unique and so individual. She has the ability to combine opposites, to be both painterly and sculptural, delicate and strong, simple and complex, innocent and sophisticated: qualities which do not arise out of naivety, but rather from years of training, observation and hard work. Although she has never allowed her training to impinge upon her direct and unaffected response to her chosen subject matter, it is through such disciplines that she has honed the skills which enable her to express clearly and beautifully the vision of her quiet eye. And that eye is both selective and personal.'