

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Robert Louis BANKS (Cheltenham 1911 - London(?) 2000)

The Corner of a Ryokan in Gion, Kyoto

Watercolour over a pencil underdrawing, laid down on board.

Signed and numbered *BANKS / 275* at the lower left, and faintly inscribed with colour notes (*silvery, wood, etc.*) in pencil.

Further inscribed *for / Thia Nye(?) / from / Robert Banks / with best wishes – May '67* on a label pasted onto the backing board.

Stamped *Robert Banks / Drawn in Kyoto* in Japanese in red ink on the backing board.

344 x 258 mm. (13 1/2 x 10 1/8 in.) [sheet]

344 x 262 mm. (13 1/2 x 10 3/8 in.) [board]

The present sheet was drawn in a ryokan, a type of traditional Japanese inn, situated in the iconic Gion district of Kyoto; an area known for its geisha culture, bars, restaurants and teahouses. Another large watercolour of Kyoto by Robert Banks, a large sheet depicting the Taizo-In landscape garden created by the 16th century painter and calligrapher Kano Matonobu, was sold at auction in 2011, while a view of the interior of a Kyoto tea house appeared at auction in London in 2001. A watercolour by Banks of a similar subject to the present sheet, also exhibited at the Trafford Gallery, is recorded in a photograph in the Witt Library of the Courtauld Institute of Art.

Artist description:

An architect and artist, Robert Banks studied at the Architectural Association between 1928 and 1933. Following military service in the Second World War, during which he was awarded the Military Cross,

Banks worked as a town planner until the 1950s, when he began to devote himself to painting. A fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, he exhibited his work at the Trafford Gallery and the Alwin Gallery in London. He travelled extensively around Italy, painting views in Rome, Venice, Lecce, Naples, Urbino and elsewhere, and also visited Greece and Japan.