

Scottish Paintings & Sculpture (524)

Thu, 7th Jun 2018, Edinburgh

Lot 27

Estimate: £4000 - £6000 + Fees

SAM BOUGH R.S.A. (BRITISH 1822-1878) FIREWORKS OVER EDINBURGH 10TH MARCH 1863

Signed and indistinctly dated, inscribed on a contemporary label verso 'The Marriage of the Prince of Wales', oil on panel

24cm x 54.5cm (9.5in x 21.5in)

Note: There is a contemporary cutting from The Courant newspaper verso dated March 16, 1863 which states 'We had the pleasure of seeing in Mr Bough's studio on Saturday last, a small sketch in oils of the splendid illuminations which gave such universal satisfaction on Tuesday evening. The sketch is taken from the Calton Hill; and the long line of Princes Street filled with a living tide of happy and good humoured sightseers; the deep valley between the Old and New Town; the Scott Monument; the steep slope of the Castle bank blazing with padelle (sic), the grand old fortress itself with its battlements and embrasures lit up with flickering flames; the spire of St.Giles with its coronets of coloured lights and the beautiful outlines of the dome of St.George's defined by long lines of pure white light are all brought before us within the space of a foot squareNo artist in our school is so well fitted as Mr Bough to depict 'The festal city's blaze'.

Considered to be one of the most influential and prolific Scottish landscape painters of the 19th century, Sam Bough was a self-taught artist who spent much of his career working in Scotland. Born in 1822 in Carlisle, Bough settled in Manchester where he worked as a scene painter in the Theatre Royal. After moving to Glasgow he continued to paint whilst working at the New Princes Theatre. Bough's reputation as a topographical and landscape painter grew during the 1850's, and by the time he resettled in Edinburgh he had established himself as a successful landscape artist. Whilst living in the capital he created some of his most important paintings.

Fireworks over Edinburgh 10th March 1863 masterfully depicts the city amidst its celebrations of the marriage of Prince Edward VII, the eldest son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Bough's experience of working as a theatre scene painter is reflected through the confidence by which he works in a small scale and effortlessly captures the fleeting atmospheric effects. Sketched from the top of Calton Hill, the painting is both a celebration of the wedding and the city itself. The firework display illuminates the city's landmarks including the fortress, Scott Monument and spires of St. Giles Cathedral. Bough's interest in the depiction of the changing effects of light is reflected through the dramatic representation of the fiery night sky over the city, whilst in the foreground a tide of sightseers adds to the sense of vitality to the scene. Bough's restless energy is revealed through his expressive colouring which effortlessly captures the mood of the joyous event. His spontaneity, loose technique and interest in capturing the fleeting atmospheric effects establishes him as an important predecessor of the Scottish Impressionists, paving the way for the development towards a



freer, plein air style.

Contemporary historical records reveal the extent to which this Royal Wedding was a national celebration. In the English village of Goudhurst, there was a full day of public celebrations, starting with the 'distribution of meat to the widowers, widows, sick poor and aged,' followed by a procession, different servings of tea and refreshments, and a large bonfire in the evening. In the week following the wedding, a whole ox was roasted on the Plain, and the meat distributed to over 400 people in the course of the next few days. A rib from the ox remains in the collection of the Goudhurst historical society.

The sale of this striking painting coincides with another Royal wedding, that of Prince Henry of Wales and Meghan Markle on 19th May 2018.