

Scottish Paintings & Sculpture (623)

Fri, 4th Dec 2020, Live Online | Viewing in Edinburgh

Viewing Times:

Public viewing now closed

Lot 136

Estimate: £15000 - £20000 + Fees

ALEXANDER NASMYTH (SCOTTISH 1758-1840) EDINBURGH FROM THE NORTH-WEST

Signed and dated 1822, oil on canvas

82cm x 115cm (32.25in x 45.25in)

Note: Akin to fellow Edinburgh residents, Nasmyth favoured philosopher Thomas Reid's idea of man finding his place within the order of nature through the proper use of his senses and talents. This idea, which served as the inspiration behind the design and building of Edinburgh's New Town, is echoed here in *A View of Edinburgh from the North-West*. Painted in 1822, the same year as George IV's historic visit to the city, Nasmyth celebrates the city by moving beyond its architecture.

The Edinburgh skyline is nestled in front of the looming, iconic Arthur's Seat, and framed by forestry and rural landscape in the immediate foreground. The buildings of the city erupt forth into the boundless sky, like rock formations in the distance, emphasizing their part of the wider order of the natural world.

Nasmyth's talent for balance and perspective across a composition is revealed as these different landscape layers unfold from the countryside setting where we stand and view. He masterfully depicts the city as a part of the natural world; there is no distinction between what is man-made city and what is mother nature.

A View of Edinburgh from the North-West is a particularly Scottish view, capturing the rugged and distinctive topography that characterises the capital city and the surrounding countryside, with the city skyline cradled in the centre.

As Duncan McMillan surmised in his book *The Birth of Scottish Landscape*, 'The Edinburgh pictures are a high point of Nasmyth's art' (p.141). If this is the case, then *A View of Edinburgh from the North-West* is undoubtedly one of Nasmyth's finest works.

