



Contemporary & Post-War Art | Prints & Multiples (635)

Wed, 7th Apr 2021, Live Online

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Lot 80

Estimate: £50000 - £70000 + Fees

§ ♦ JACK VETTRIANO (SCOTTISH 1951-) RITUAL OF COURTSHIP

Signed lower right, oil on canvas

81.5cm x 71cm (32in x 28in)

Jack Vettriano is one of the UK's best loved contemporary artists. Indeed his career might best be described as something of a phenomenon. The passion with which the public have taken his work into their hearts is rivalled by few others over the last 30 years.

Vettriano was born Jack Hoggan in Fife in 1951 into a background of poverty. Famously completely self-taught, Vettriano was gifted a set of watercolours by a girlfriend for his 21st, thus beginning his passion for painting. His early work, signed Hoggan, was heavily influenced by Impressionism and the artists he observed at Kirkcaldy Museum and Gallery. Art became a burning passion, and in 1986 at the age of 36, he quit his job in educational research and moved to Edinburgh to pursue art full time. Though rejected from the Edinburgh College of Art, he submitted two paintings to the Royal Scottish Academy's open exhibition in 1987. Both sold on the first day and a number of galleries immediately made their approach.

What followed was a stratospheric rise to success with major gallery representation and shows that would sell out within hours. Reproductions of his most famous painting 'The Singing Butler' (1992) became the "best selling image" in Britain. His 2013 retrospective at the Kelvingrove Gallery in Glasgow was their best attended of all time.

Hailing from the same period as 'The Singing Butler', this work from his series 'Ritual of Courtship', captures the quintessence of what so appeals to the public about his painting. Bathed in the golden glow of summers past, his figures wear the distinctive style of the 1940s, from the capacious double-breasted blazer of the central figure to the cat-eye flicks of the lady's sunglasses. The scene reads like a vignette from an old photograph or a piece of classic cinema, and recalls the work of American realist, Edward Hopper. The inscription 'Fish Teas' on a nearby wooden building nods to a sense of realism, charmingly grounding the painting in a Scottish setting and tapping into our British nostalgia for seaside resorts from eras gone by. Romance and attraction are near constant undercurrents of Vettriano's work and this piece is no different; the two gentlemen clearly taking an interest in the stylish woman right of centre in the frame.

Though his unorthodox rise to success out-with the usual art

world frameworks was the source of much controversy, his keen market - which once again seems to be on the rise - attests to the longevity of interest in his work and his firm position in the canon of British art.