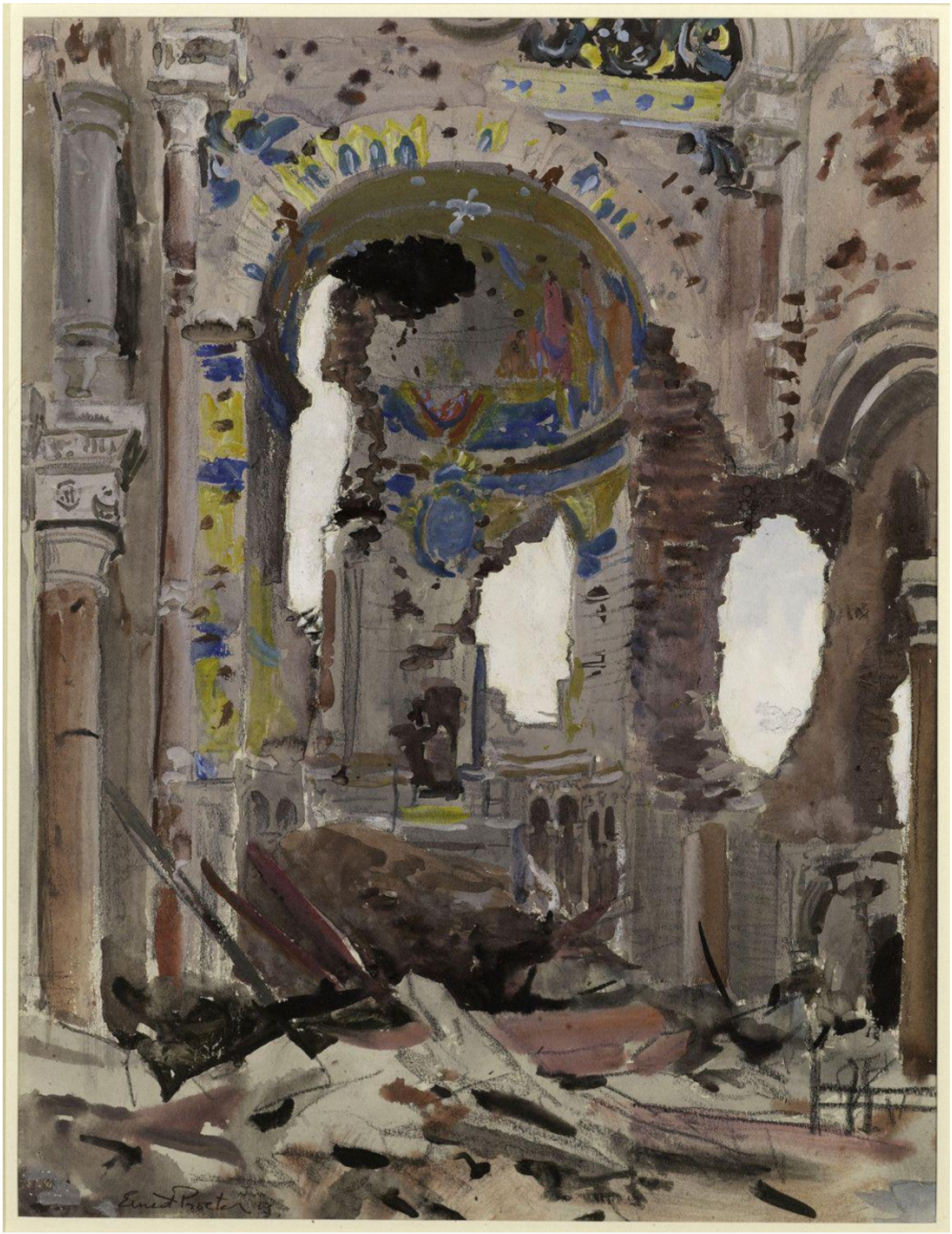
Bombed Out Interior of Albert Church

Ernest Procter

Sold



REF: 77602

Height: 80.01 cm (31.5")

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Width: 60.96 cm (24")

Description

During the First World War Procter served with the British Red Cross as a member of the Friends Ambulance Service. He documented his experiences in wartime France in drawings and watercolours recording the troops, wounded and war torn buildings. In the present work Procter records the destroyed apse of the church in the town of Albert in the Somme. In January 1915 the statue of Mary and the infant Jesus on the top of the Basilica of Notre-Dame de BrebiÃ¨res was hit by a shell and put into a horizontal position. The Germans said that whoever made the statue fall would lose the war, and number of legends surrounding the “Leading Virgin” developed among German, French and British soldiers. The German army recaptured the town in March 1918 during the Spring Offensive; the British, to prevent the Germans from using the church tower as an observation post, direct their bombardment against the basilica. The statue fell in April 1918 and was never recovered. In August 1918 the Germans were again forced to retreat and the British reoccupied Albert until the end of the war.