Thomas Carlyle

Walter Greaves

Sold



REF: 236912

Height: 68.58 cm (27")

Sarah Colegrave Fine Art
London & Oxfordshire
+44 (0)77 7594 3722 sarah@sarahcolegrave.co.uk

Width: 57.15 cm (22.5")

Framed Height: 111.76 cm (44")

Framed Width: 96.52 cm (38")

Description

Greaves was the son of a Chelsea boat-builder and waterman. He and his brother Henry initially trained as shipwrights but in their spare time drew and painted local views of the Thames and the streets and lanes of Chelsea. In the early 1860s they met Whistler who was to become a close friend and mentor. They took Whistler on the river, acted as studio assistants and became his pupils. The relationship with Whistler lasted until the early 1880s when the irascible master fell out with his hero-worshiping disciples. Walter continued to paint and draw views of the Thames and Chelsea. As with Whistler’s etchings, these were often retrospective views showing the area before the building of the Embankment in the early 1870s, when vast areas of the old waterfront were demolished. Confusion often arises over the dates that appear on his works, as they indicate the date of the retrospective view rather than the date of execution. Much of his life was spent in poverty and in 1922 he was admitted to the Charterhouse as a Poor Brother, where he remained until his death. Walter Greaves exhibited his work in London at the Goupil Gallery and Grosvenor Gallery and in the provinces. His early work was painted in a naÃ¯ve and primitive style but subsequent paintings shared many characteristics with those of Whistler. His work is represented in the collection of the Tate Gallery and elsewhere. Several exhibition of his work were held at the Parkin Gallery in the 1980s. Greaves executed a number of portraits of Carlyle in pen and ink, watercolour and oil. The inscription on the backboard states this is the original drawing, done from life, when Carlyle was sitting in Whistler’s studio. It is difficult to be certain that this is the case although it is very like the oil portrait now in the collection of the National Gallery of Scotland.