

The Factory Town

John Henry Norman

Sold



Description

JOHN HENRY NORMAN R.O.I. English School 1896 – 1982 The Factory Town Oil on board, signed and dated 1950 51 x 63.5 cms 20 x 25 ins

John Henry Norman was known as a Coventry artist although he was born in Nottingham on 9th September 1896, leaving there when he was aged thirteen.

He served in the Army from 1915 to 1919, seeing action in France and was awarded the Military Medal in 1917. On his demobilisation, he found employment with the Rover Motor factory in Coventry as a crankshaft balancer but also enrolled at the Coventry School of Art. Between 1919 and 1924 he attended evening classes there under the instruction of the landscape painter William Henry Milnes R.B.A.

Norman was a founder of the Coventry Art Circle and was its Chairman for many years and he exhibited his works at the United Society of Artists. The U.A. was a London based independent non-profit society which was founded in 1921 with the sole aim of giving the opportunity to artists to exhibit their work there who resided outside the capital. He also showed at the Royal Academy, the Royal Society of British Artists and the Royal Institute of Oil Painters in London as well as at the Royal Birmingham Society of Painters, the Paris Salon and other venues in the provinces in England. In 1934 he was awarded full membership of the R.O.I.

First known as a landscape artist in the romantic style, he was influenced by plein-air painters such as JMW Turner, Sir George Clausen and Paul Nash but by the mid 1930s he gravitated towards more freedom in his interpretation and a mode of formal abstraction. He developed the device of his Golden Mean charts which were a series of geometrically constructed relationships and radiations within the context of a painting. This was a radical artistic reconstruction where the depiction of a subject based on the Renaissance format of the Golden Section could be broken up into other related elements. A landscape might be portrayed in the centre of the painting in a naturalistic cubist manner but encircled by a seemingly spinning abstraction of segments of the main painting. His still-lives became much more abstract and displayed a stylistic nod to Picasso and the Modernist movement and Norman exhorted his fellow artists to "...guarantee your relativities".

Despite his artistic output and the strength of his commitment to progress in interpretation in painting, Norman still worked in full-time employment. He had left the Rover company to join the Standard Motor Company where he stayed for twenty years. During the Second World War he worked in an ammunition factory and shortly before reaching retirement was showroom supervisor for Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft.

The Herbert Museum and Art Gallery in Coventry has six works by J H Norman in its collection and he is also represented in the Williamson Art Gallery in the Wirral.

Dictionary of British Artists Working 1900-1950 - Grant M. Waters

Artist's in Britain since 1945 - David Buckman

The Dictionary of British Artists 1880-1940 - J Johnson and A Greutzner

