

Figures in the Boulevard

George Leslie Hunter (1877-1931)



REF:

Description

Ink and pastel Signed 'L Hunter' lower left 27.3 x 36.2 cms (11 x 14 ins)

Provenance Collection of Major Ion R. Harrison, Glasgow

George Leslie Hunter was born at Rothesay on the Island of Bute on the west coast of Scotland in 1877 but emigrated with his family to California in 1892. Always keen on drawing and sketching, he made his living as an illustrator while teaching himself to paint. Hunter's first visit to France in 1904 was instrumental in his decision to become a painter rather than an illustrator, but it was not until 1914 when he visited Etaples on the northern coast of France that one starts to see the emergence of his Colourist talent. It is not clear how Hunter and his work became known to Vincent van Gogh's Glasgow dealer, Alexander Reid, but this association was the critical factor in launching his career. Reid had been impressed enough by Hunter's work to give him his first solo exhibition in 1916 at his gallery in Glasgow. The exhibition found favour with the critics and more importantly, the association with Reid introduced Hunter to a group of patrons who were to support him for the next fifteen years. This drawing was previously in the collection of Major Ion Harrison, a Glasgow shipping magnate and highly important patron of Samuel John Peploe, Francis Campbell Boileau Cadell and George Leslie Hunter, three of the four Scottish Colourists. Taking advice from his great friend Dr Tom Honeyman, Director of Glasgow Art Gallery, Harrison assembled an extraordinary range of pictures and became close friends with the artists. When his collection of Scottish Colourists was shown at the McLellan Galleries in Glasgow in 1951, no fewer than 179 works were exhibited. Hunter was the first of the Colourists whom he encountered, in Glasgow in 1919. When he first attended an exhibition of Hunter's work at Reid's gallery, he later recalled, "old Mr Alex Reid said to me that if he was a wealthy man he would buy every Hunter in the exhibition. Hunter always maintained that he was not painting for to-day but for fifty years hence. Having lived twenty-five years with several of them, I find that Hunter's prophecy is coming true."