

KYNANCE FINE ART

The Lighthouse

Fred Uhlmann (1901-1985)



REF:

Description

Oil on Canvas Signed and dated '55 lower right 61 x 91.5 cms (24 x 36 ins)

Provenance Zwemmer Gallery, London Belgrave Gallery Ltd, London

Fred Uhlman was a German-English writer, painter and lawyer of Jewish origin. He was born in Stuttgart, Germany on 19th January 1901 into a prosperous middle class Jewish family from parents Ludwig and Johanna. He studied at the Universities of Freiburg, Munich and Tübingen from where, in 1923, he graduated with a degree in Law followed by a Doctorate in Canon and Civil Law. He practised as a Barrister from 1927 to 1933. In March 1933 he emigrated to Paris to avoid Nazi prosecution. Foreigners were not permitted to take paid employment and if caught would be immediately expelled from the country. Uhlman therefore taught himself to paint and supported himself in this way, selling his work privately if he could, but buyers were hard to come by. In April 1936 he moved to Tossa de Mar, a small fishing village on the Costa Brava in Spain, but shortly after this, the Spanish Civil War broke out and he decided to move back to Paris via Marseilles. Whilst making a telephone call to Diana Croft, daughter of Lord Croft, his passport and wallet were stolen from his jacket. He continued his journey to Paris where he received a telephone call to say his items had been recovered and they were sent on. He had been on the brink of being a stateless person, open to internment or expulsion. Fred Uhlman's first solo exhibition was held at the Galerie Le Niveau in Paris in 1935. On 3rd September 1936, Uhlman landed in England with no money and unable to speak the language. Two months later, he married Diana Croft on 4th November 1936, much against her parent's wishes. They lived on Downshire Hill, Hampstead which had become a favourite cultural and artistic meeting place for refugees and exiles who had been forced to flee their homeland. He founded the Free German League of Culture whose members included Oskar Kokoschka and Stefan Zweig. They would spend their summers in Croesor Valley, Gwynedd, Wales. In 1938, he exhibited at the Zwemmer Gallery and from then on he exhibited regularly in one man shows and mixed exhibitions throughout Britain. This work, *The Lighthouse*, is known to have been exhibited at the Zwemmer Gallery. After the outbreak of the Second World War, Uhlman was interned by the British Government in June 1940 in Hutchison Camp on the Isle of Man. Here he met Kurt Schwitters, a fellow internee. He was released six months later and reunited with his wife and newly born daughter, Caroline. Later Fred and Diana had a son, Francis Raymond Croft. The British Museum has a collection of his drawings from this period. Fred Uhlman is known to have formed a major collection of African Art which he bequeathed to Newcastle University. In Post-War years he sold many pieces to the British Museum acting as a "Marchand Amateur". His memoirs are held at the British Library, under embargo until 2035, 50 years after Uhlman died. He is also known to have donated other internment drawings to the Staats Galerie in his native town of Stuttgart. They were exhibited in 1921 "despite everything, Fred Uhlman, a Jewish fate". His work is mostly in oil of landscapes, townscapes and still ...