

KYNANCE FINE ART

Kynance Mews

Austin Taylor (1908 - 1992)



REF:

## Description

Oil on Canvas Signed 46 x 36 cm (18.1 x 14.1 ins)

Austin Taylor was born in Bolton, Lancashire. His father, William, a miner, emigrated to Winnipeg, Canada in 1912, where he worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway, preparing a home for his wife Ellen and their two small sons. His father served in the First World War and was killed at Passchendaele in 1917, just after the birth of a third child. This rendered Austin, then nine years old, the man of the family. By the age of 14, he had to find a job to earn money, but his enthusiasm for art led him to evening classes at the Winnipeg School of Art, studying with Lemoine Fitzgerald, who was one of the "Group of Seven" artists. He was able to use his drawing skills, working as an illustrator for Bridgens, the outfitters, making drawings for their mail-order catalogues. This brought him into contact with two other notable Canadian artists, Bob Bruce and Gordon Smith. Taylor was called up in 1943, served as a sapper in World War Two. Following the war he studied in the USA, joining the Art Students' League in New York where his teachers included Morris Kantor, Yasuo Kuniyoshi and Vaclav Vytlačil. In 1948, Taylor emigrated to England and set himself up as an artist. He married Winifred Pluckrose, an artist, who supported them on her teacher's salary plus posing as his model in the evenings. He began a series of successful shows at the St George's Gallery in 1949, the Redfern Gallery in 1950, the Leicester Galleries in 1951, the Beaux Arts Gallery in 1952 and the Ware Gallery in 1956. He began regular visits to Paris, making life drawings at La Grande Chaumiere, also studying in the British Museum Print Room. Taylor started to become disillusioned with modern art, feeling it was becoming "gimmicky and dead-end" and chose not to exhibit further. Between 1973-1980 he sold some paintings at the Marlborough-Godard Gallery, Montreal. In 1980 he entered for the Greater London Council's Spirit of London art competition, winning second prize for a painting of the London Underground. The following year he entered the competition again and won first prize. Austin Taylor was prolific, known as a painter and draughtsman. On the last day of his life in 1992, he was drawing at a chateau on the Loire. Duncan Campbell Fine Art held a posthumous retrospective of his work in London and sold his work extensively at exhibitions in 2002-2004. Taylor's work can be found in collections at the London Transport Museum, Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow and 167 pictures, including a self-portrait, were donated to the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa. His works show his life's journey from Canada to London, Bruges and many other European cities plus intimate snapshots of his wife engaged in domestic tasks. This work of Kynance Mews is known by reputation as the most beautiful Mews in London with its leafy arbours and miniature gardens adorning the cobbles. One can admire Taylor's skill as a draughtsman in this work.