

Sketch for “An Episode in the childhood of a Genius”

Carel Weight (1908-1997)



REF:

Description

Oil on Panel Signed to label (attached Verso) 1932 43.5 x 65 cms (17 x 26 ins) Provenance J Beddington, Director of Wildenstein, Private collection

Label Verso:

The Arts Council of Great Britain, Belgrave Square, London SW1

Four Contemporary British Painters

(Leonard Appelbee, Claude Rogers, Ruskin Spear & Carel Weight)

1947, No: 27 Label Verso:

Carel Weight, 5 Shepherds Bush Green, London W10

Carel Victor Morlais Weight was born in Paddington, London in 1908. In his early childhood, he was sent by his parents to live with a foster mother, Rose Matkin. She was also his Godmother, who lived in the working-class district of Fulham. Weight would live with her during the week and was returned to his parents in a middle-class household at the weekends, making him acutely aware of the contrast between deprivation and affluence from an early age. Other early experiences of the unexpected, such as a burnt-down building or a bus mounting a pavement would also have an impact on his visual output as an artist in his later years. Weight studied at the local Hammersmith School of Art from 1928-30. It was here that he met Ruskin Spear, who became a great life-long friend. From 1931-1933, he was at Goldsmiths College, where he developed his imaginative composition under the tutelage of Gardiner, Mansbridge and Kokoshka. It was at this time that he met his future wife, Helen Roeder. They were together for 60 years before they married in 1990. He was able to support himself as an artist by becoming a teacher at The Beckenham School of Art from 1932 – 1939. In 1933 he hired a space in the Cooling Gallery, Bond Street to showcase his work for his first Solo Exhibition. He exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Royal Society of British Artists and was a Committee Member of the Artists International Association, which helped artists fleeing Nazi Europe. He exhibited at many galleries throughout the UK, notably the Zwemmer Gallery and the New Grafton Gallery in London. During the Second World War, Weight was called up to the Royal Engineers. He taught with the Army Education Corps 1944-45 and was then helped by Kenneth Clark to be appointed as an official War Artist 1945-46. He travelled to Italy, Austria and Greece which he described as “a Scholarship from the Army”. On his return to London in 1947, he was invited to teach at the Royal College of Art. He became a Professor of painting there from 1957 – 1973, when he retired, and taught among others, David Hockney, R.B. Kitaj and Peter Blake. He executed a mural for the Country Pavilion of the Festival of Britain in 1951. He was elected to the Royal Society of British Artists in 1934, London Group in 1950, Royal Academy in April 1965 and as a Senior RA in 1984 and was awarded a CBE in 1962. Although seen as a rather solitary figure, he had close friendships with Stanley Spencer, Mary Fedden, L S Lowry, John Bratby & Jean Cooke. He is known to have been strongly influenced by Stanley Spencer and by the late 1950's developed a deep interest in painting religious scenes. Weight said “Religion isn't that important to me but it provides one with wonderful scenes”. By 1958 he had completed two major paintings of biblical subjects, Ent...