Sussex River, Evening Sky

Ivon Hitchens (1893-1979)

REF:

Description

Oil on Canvas
Signed bottom left
Dated 1969 on artist's handwritten note verso40.6 x 74.3 cms (16 x 29.25 ins)Provenance Exhibition Label verso:New Grafton Gallery, 1a New Grafton Street, London W1X 3LBArtist: Ivon Hitchens, Born: 1895, Title: Sussex River, Evening Sky,Medium: Oil on canvas Size: 15 ½ x 28 ½Exhibited 19.8.75Owner: Peter Barkworth Esq, 47 Flask Walk, NW3 1HH
Artists handwritten-label verso: "Sussex River, Evening Sky" 1969,
16 x 29 ¼ inches by Ivon Hitchens, Greenleaves, Petworth, SussexAn additional artist's handwritten label verso:
"You are advised not to remove this glass without first consulting the artist and Waddington Galleries"
Ivon Hitchens was born in London in 1893. He studied at St Johns Wood School of Art (1911-1912) and at the Royal Academy Schools on and off from 1912–1919. He started to exhibit in the 1920's and joined the London Group in the 1930's until the 1940's, after which he exhibited independently. In 1920 he was the founding member of the Seven and Five Society and was the sole member to remain with it during the 16 years it existed until its closure in 1935. Other artist friends who joined the society were Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, John Piper, Cedric Morris, Ben & Winifred Nicholson and Christopher Wood. They were the driving force of Modern British Artists in 1930s and held an exhibition in 1934 showing entirely abstract art.Hitchens had many exhibitions throughout his career and his work was extremely prolific. He had his first one-man show in 1925 at the Mayor Gallery, in 1928 at Arthur Tooth & Sons, in 1933, 1935 and 1937 with Alex Reid & Lefevre, from 1940 the first of ten one-man shows with Leicester Galleries and from 1960 the first of 14 one-man shows with Waddington Galleries, where this work, "Sussex River, Evening Sky" is known to have been exhibited in 1975. One retrospective of his work was held in 1979 at the Royal Academy; numerous others have followed.Ivon Hitchens reached a great turning point in his career in 1940 when his studio in Hampstead was destroyed by bomb damage. The previous year he had purchased six acres of Sussex woodland to have somewhere peaceful to paint outside London. He quickly left wartime London with his pianist wife, Mollie and young baby son, John, to live in cramped conditions in a red-painted gypsy caravan, towed on to their land near Petworth, by carthorses. Over time, buildings were erected on the land, a studio and a house called Greenleaves. They created a haphazard garden, planted sunflowers, poppies and dahlias in the sandy soil, were surrounded by semi-wild vegetation of silver birch, bracken and rhododendron from which Hitchens derived endless inspiration. The poppies featured frequently in his work for more than 40 years. Although Hitchens loved flowers and gardens, his son John says that he was "no gardener". Each Spring, a local garden nursery, Ayling, near Midhurst, would plant up beds for Hitchens to paint to replace the blooms in his own haphazard garden. Although Hitchens ventured to Didling, Iping Common, Heyshott and Duncton, his main focus was on his own woodland garden at Gre...