Seated female nude

Frank Dobson C.B.E R.A

£530

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REF: 1045

Height: 26 cm (10.2")

Width: 33 cm (13")

Framed Height: 51 cm (20.1")

Framed Width: 54 cm (21.3")

Description

Although it can be difficult to date Dobson's drawings on stylistic grounds, this work is quite likely to be from the 1920s. The carefully controlled mark-making and mask-like features of the model, as well as the seated pose, with the figure resting on one arm, would all suggest an early date. In the years after World War I, Dobson was briefly an exhibitor with Wyndham Lewis's Group X and influenced by earlier Vorticist art. At least two other surviving drawings from 1919-20, and sculptures made in the 1920s, depict female and male models seated on the floor, supporting themselves on one arm, and further drawings exploring such poses were again made in around 1941. Elements of the model's pose in this drawing are echoed in several sculptures of the 1920s, such as Susanna (1922-4), Seated Torso (1923), Woman Seated (c.1926), Reclining Nude Figure (c.1928) and, perhaps most closely, Woman Waking (c.1925) and Truth (1930). The locked arm enabled him to capture the musculature of this limb against the softer forms of the female model or the muscular body of his male model. The use of densely hatched pencil strokes for shading next juxtaposed with pastel for the lights was a technique he commonly used at the time, for example in the 1918 drawing for Series 29, in the Higgins Bedford The coloured paper which he was also partial to in the inter-war years allowed the white pastel to capture the light on the models limbs. Also characteristic of works made up to about 1920 are the mask-like features of the model, echoing those of his Vortiscist-influenced works of this time and the immediate previous years. In 1920, Dobson met Wyndham Lewis, who was forming the short-lived GroupX in an attempt to revive the pre-war Vorticism movement. Dobson exhibited as a member of the group in its show at the Mansard Gallery, in Heal's department store, from 27 March to 24 April that year. Other exhibitors included Lewis, Etchells, Ginner, Dismorr and Wadsworth. Much of Dobson's early work on paper was destroyed when his Chelsea studio was bombed in the Blitz. Fairly subtle and subdued compared with his later, and more vivid drawings, this study is beautifully observed and modelled with a sculptor's eye, and drawn with the artist's assured, descriptive outline. It is also, in the most part, highly finished: before 1920, Dobson's drawings were largely created as an end in themselves, rather than as studies for sculpture, like most of his later works on paper. His first solo exhibition, at the Leicester Galleries in November 1921, included eight drawings described as nude studies.

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