

An impressionist landscape painting by William White Warren. The scene depicts a river or stream flowing through a lush, green landscape. In the foreground, there are dense green bushes and a small boat with a red interior. The middle ground is dominated by a large, dark green tree with a thick trunk. The background shows a hazy, blue sky with soft, textured brushstrokes. The overall style is characteristic of the Impressionist movement, with a focus on light and color.

MARTYN GREGORY & JAMES MACKINNON

WILLIAM
WHITE
WARREN

APRIL 2021

WILLIAM WHITE WARREN (c. 1832 – 1911)

This is our second collaboration on the elusive British painter William White Warren. The first, ‘An exhibition of oil sketches by William White Warren c. 1832 – 1911’, was held at 34 Bury Street in the winter of 1995. Today the gallery has been closed to the public for the better part of a year, and this exhibition is taking place online – something that would have been met with incredulity a quarter of a century ago. The old way is definitely the best way however, and we look forward to welcoming you all in person in the very near future.

Born circa 1832, William White Warren is first recorded in 1860, when, living in Peckham, he exhibited seven paintings at the British Institution. In 1869, he held the first of a series of substantial one-man shows of his ‘original oil sketches.’ Warren was evidently well travelled: many of the views in his three recorded one-man shows were from trips to France, Italy, Cyprus and North Africa. They also contained a number of freely sketched views of London and its environs, and it is these that make up the basis of this selection.

Warren achieved some considerable success in his own lifetime. By the 1880s he had the means to amass a large personal collection of pictures and antiquities. These were auctioned off over five days at Christie’s in 1886, ‘in consequence of ill health and the owner going abroad’, with the catalogue giving his address as ‘21 Suffolk Street, Pall Mall’ - as prestigious an address then as now. Amongst a diverse selection of glass, porcelain and metalworks were around 51 of his own works that fetched prices of up to 50 guineas apiece. Despite the success of this sale, Warren appears to have fallen on hard times, and in the last years of his life kept a small shop in Bristol. He died in 1911.

Warren’s posthumous reputation was almost immediately coloured by scandal. Soon after his death the Bath Antique dealer and restorer Alfred Jones had acquired a collection of Warren’s pictures, and misrepresenting them as works by Constable, sold them to the well-known Bond Street dealers Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell. The gallery decided to sue Alfred Jones for fraudulent misrepresentation. The hearing was extensively reported, despite the jury failing to reach a verdict.

Genuine comparison with Constable is certainly optimistic, but Warren’s freedom and verve does offer a refreshing corrective to the stereotype that Victorian paintings are over-fussy. In some cases his sketches border the abstract, and seem to sparkle with pure colour; they carry a sense of *joie de vivre*, a pleasure in his surroundings that can still be felt today.

Warren found greater appreciation in the 20th century, with his work championed by the famous collector and scholar Paul Wallraf, and later John Gere, Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, who donated a view of Crystal Palace to the National Gallery¹ (L876) Today, Warren’s oil sketches can also be found at the V&A, Museums Sheffield, and the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath.

¹ Stephen Ongpin, <https://www.stephenongpin.com/artist/236861/william-white-warren>

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- 1 *Old boat builder's yard*
Oil on card on canvas
9 x 17 ³/₄ in
Inscribed: 'Old boat builder's yard[...on the Thames]?' verso
See no. 6 for a sketch of the building

£1500

2

St James's Park

Oil on card

7 ¹/₈ x 13 in

Inscribed as title verso

£800



3

Allhallows Church, Tower Hill

Oil on board

7 x 12 ³/₄

£1400





4 *Lifton, Devon*
Oil on card
7 ⁷/₈ x 10 in
Inscribed verso as title

£650

5

Dawn over Loch

Oil on card

7 x 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ in

£400



6

Windsor Castle

Oil on card

5 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ in

£950





7

Ruined house at boatyard
Oil on card, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Inscribed 'Ladb[...]'s House' centre
See no. 1

£400



8

Tree lined meadow
Oil on card
3 x 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ in
Inscribed as title verso

£280

9

Tracks towards sea and sunset
Oil on card,
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in

£280



10

Lee Churchyard, London

Oil on card

7 ¼ x 12 ⅝ in

£600



11

Ross Castle, Killarney

Oil on card on panel

7 ⅛ x 7 ⅞ in

£500





12 *House and garden*
Oil on canvas
11 ½ x 15 ¾ in

£500

13

*St James's Churchyard,
Hampstead*

Oil on card on panel
7 ¹/₈ x 12 ³/₄ in

£850



14

Huntingdon Church

Oil on card on panel
5 ¹/₂ x 11 ⁷/₈ in

Inscribed as title verso

£500





15 *The Thames at Twickenham*
Oil on card on panel
7 ¹/₈ x 12 ³/₄ in
Inscribed: 'Twickenham Castle Thames' verso

£1400

16

Rochester Castle

Oil on card

8 ¼ x 12 in

£650



17

Sunset, London

Oil on card

5 ¾ x 11 ⅛ in

£330



18

St Bennet's, Fenchurch Street

Oil on card on panel

12 ³/₈ x 7 ¹/₈ in

Inscribed as title verso

£1100



19

Coastal view
Oil on card
7 x 12 ¾ in

£450



20

Study at Welbeck, South Yorkshire
Oil on card on panel
5 5/8 x 10 3/8 in
Inscribed verso as title

£250





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