

Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



Ambrose McEvoy (Crudwell, Wilts 1878 - London 1927)

Portrait of the Hon. Lois Sturt

Oil on canvas

1920

The dazzling young sitter is Lois Sturt (1900-1937), an aristocratic British “flapper” and silent movie star whose colourful life raised more than a few eyebrows. The daughter of the 2nd Baron Alington and Lady Feodorowna Yorke, Sturt studied at the Slade School of Fine Art and became a fixture on the London party scene. Described by Barbara Cartland in her memoirs as “fiery, impetuous and with dark, flashing eyes”, she would drive around town breaking speed limits, danced on stage, learned how to fly a plane, owned race horses and was a favourite subject of gossip columnists. After an affair with the Earl of Pembroke and a dalliance with the Duke of Kent, she married the Hon Evan Morgan, son of Viscount Tredegar. After they separated she spent some time travelling and died in Budapest of a heart attack brought about by years of alcohol abuse and slimming treatments.

Encouraged by James McNeill Whistler, McEvoy attended the Slade School of Fine Art from 1893 to 1896, where he met Augustus John. He became a member of the New English Art Club and in 1906 bought 107 Grosvenor Road, overlooking the River Thames in Chelsea, where he lived and worked for the rest of his life, often painting his portraits there. McEvoy’s works include cityscapes and landscapes but portraits became his main interest. He established a reputation with portraits of fashionable women, such as The Hon. Mrs Cecil Baring (c.1917; London, Tate) and his work was much in demand. He developed a bravura technique that enhanced his sitters’ charms as much as it paid tribute to their social status. McEvoy visited New York and exhibited at the Duveen Galleries in 1920.

Provenance

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- Mrs Claude Johnson
- Ernest Philip & Brown, Chelsea
- Arthur Tooth & Sons, ca. 1980
- Christie's London, 12 June 1982, lot 99
- Private collection, Oxford, until 2015

Exhibitions

Exhibited:

- London, Royal Academy, Winter exhibition, 1928, n. 381

Literature:

Published:

- W. Cross, Lois Sturt, Wild Child, A Glance at Hon. Lois Ina Sturt, Viscountess Tredegar, Gwent, UK, 2014, p. 34