

Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



Sir William Orpen (Stillorgan, Dublin 1871 - London 1931)

“Orpsie Boy”

Circa: 1924

1924

26 x 23 cm (10 1/4 x 9 inches)

Signed, inscribed and dated “Orpsie Boy -You’re not as young as you were, my lad!/Paris, 1924’ lower right

From his Slade School days to the end of his life Orpen cultivated the habit of drawing self-portraits at regular intervals as an antidote to the daily rigour of painting portraits of others. A master of line, Orpen’s self- portraits - of which this is one of the most successful and indeed famous - are intense and psychologically engaging. Orpen uses his skill as a draughtsman to explore the rugged features of his ageing profile, a knotted brow, well combed receding hair, bushy eyebrows and a direct, concentrated stare of a man who has, over the years, spent much time analysing the features of many a society figure – all set off against a brilliant blue background.

Provenance

Possibly Oldham Art Gallery, Oldham (before 1932)

Mrs Henry Toulmin, Monterey, California (before 1963)

Christie’s, London, 9 June 1978, lot 28

Arches Gallery, Belfast, 1989

Taylor Gallery, Dublin, July 1989

Sir Michael Smurfit, until 2020

Exhibitions

London, Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour, March-May 1924, no. 46 (as Self-Portrait)

London, Taylor Gallery, Irish Art in the Twentieth Century, June-July 1989, no. 27.

Literature:

Artist's Studio Book, p 37, line 4

Cara Copland Reference: S03, no 13 and O02 line 2 (listed twice)

P.G. Konody and S Dark, Sir William Orpen: Artist and Man, London, 1932, pp. 74, 239

B Arnold, Orpen: Mirror to an Age, Jonathan Cape, London, 1981, p. 413

Smurfit Art Collection Catalogue, Smurfit, Dublin, 2001, p. 33, illustrated.