

Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



Algernon Cecil Newton (London 1880 - 1968)

London Reflections

Circa: 1942

1942

51 x 76.7 cm (20 1/4 x 30 1/4 inches)

Signed with monogram and dated '42' lower right; further signed and titled 'LONDON REFLECTIONS/ALGERNON NEWTON. A.R.A.' on canvas return

A painter of urban scenes and landscapes, Newton was born in 1880 in Hampstead, London. He went to Clare College, Cambridge, and subsequently studied at Frank Calderon's School of Animal Painting and the London School of Art, Kensington. He exhibited at the Royal Academy, London first in 1903 and participated to its shows regularly from 1930. He was made a Royal Academician in 1943 with his first one-man show at the Leicester Galleries in 1931. He worked in Cornwall and in Yorkshire as well as London. His urban views painted in a sombre, naturalistic style and his penchant for scenes involving waterways earned him the nickname 'the Canaletto of the canals'. An artist of unusual vision, Newton approached his work with meticulous care and poetic mystery.

In 1923, Newton began to exhibit regularly at the Royal Academy summer shows and he continued to send paintings there for several decades. He always admired the slightly forlorn Regency and early Victorian terraces that faced the canals in Notting Hill and Maida Vale, and gave them a curiously uninhabited look. He mused:

'I liked walking along the towing path of the Regents' Canal and seeing London as it were from the wings in a theatre. Walking along the towing path one seemed to lose all sense of locality, there was nothing to indicate the district one was passing through. Occasionally a cream-coloured Regency house would cast its trembling reflection into the dark water of the canal'

The above fits perfectly with the present work, painted in the aftermath of the Blitz in 1942.

Newton's London Reflections is deeply contemplative and evokes a sense of melancholy.

Overshadowed by a darkness arising in the foreground, it perhaps conveys a metaphor for the ongoing War, but also a sense of optimism as the figures appear to go about their lives unphased by

the events of the recent past.

Despite the grand buildings and great streets that were at his disposal, it was to the neglected waterways that he turned from the 1920s onwards as can be seen in this painting. The nature of these works and the topographical precision with which they were depicted have seen Newton referred to as the 'Regent's Canaletto'.

Provenance

Mrs G. Stanley Williams, acquired from the 1942 exhibition, and by descent to 2024

Exhibitions

London, The Royal Academy, Summer Exhibition, 4 May-8 August 1942, cat.no.42

Literature:

'The Peculiarity of Algernon Newton R.A 1880-1968', Daniel Katz Gallery, The Colt Press London,