

New Acquisition

Under the Government's tax in lieu scheme, administered by the Arts Council, the Gallery has acquired this significant new painting: ***Liverpool Docks At Night*** (1870s, oil on canvas), by the Victorian Yorkshire-born artist **John Atkinson Grimshaw** (1836-1893).



Accepted by HM Government in Lieu of Inheritance Tax from the collection of Garth and Alison Doubleday and allocated to York Art Gallery, 2019

Grimshaw was born in a back-to-back tenement in Park Street in Leeds in 1836. Leeds Art Gallery holds a number of his works, (though none have recently been on display); but this is the first to enter the York collection. Grimshaw was a largely self-taught painter (he was initially employed as a clerk for the Great Northern Railway); this together with his humble origins may help to explain some initially patronizing comments by contemporary critics. His early works (partly influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites), generally depictions of nature, are colourful and display an almost photographic level of realism. Subsequently he painted a variety of subjects, including scenes from Tennyson as well as gardens and aesthetic interiors with attractive young women influenced by the art of James Tissot. But by the 1880s he had fully perfected his trademark 'brand': images of evocative twilight or nocturnal scenes, described by a critic of his Memorial Exhibition in 1897 as

'poems in paint'. In the 1880s he set up a London studio in Chelsea, close to that of James McNeill Whistler. The often acid-tongued Whistler, with unaccustomed generosity, after visiting Grimshaw supposedly said: 'I considered myself the inventor of Nocturnes until I saw Grimmy's moonlit pictures' (Grimshaw painted his first night scene in 1867, Whistler his first nocturne in 1871). Grimshaw died in 1893, and is buried in St George's Fields, Leeds.

These works have become very popular with today's collectors (the Andrew Lloyd Webber collection contains numerous fine examples), and the new acquisition, if offered at auction, would probably carry an estimate of £120,00 - £180,000. So this is a remarkable acquisition for the Gallery, acquired at absolutely no cost!

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