

Hunter paintings sold in Edinburgh

A collection of small oil paintings by the Scottish Colourist painter George Leslie Hunter, put together a century ago by the artist's trusted framer, has fetched nearly £75,000 at auction in Edinburgh.

The six small still lifes and landscapes were completed by Hunter between 1921 and 1923, when he was living in Fife and also traveling in Europe.

They were collected by Robert Lockhart of Glasgow, a devotee of Hunter's work who also framed and gilded the artist's paintings for him.

The collection, which had remained in Lockhart's family for one hundred years, went under the hammer at Bonhams' Scottish Art Sale in Edinburgh, where they made £74,240.

The highlight was a signed 1921 still life oil painting depicting a dish of fruit on a purple cloth, which fetched £20,480.

Other small "treasures" included a 21cm x 30cm oil painting of Lower Largo Harbour in Fife, which made £14,080, while "Figures on the Jetty, Lower Largo Harbour", painted around 1922-23 and measuring just 13cm x 22cm, made £10,240.

The collection, which also included three "delightful" landscapes depicting village scenes in France and Italy, were

all contained in gilded frames thought to have been by Lockhart himself.

May Matthews, Bonhams Managing Director, Scotland, said: "It is very rare to see a collection of work by one of the Colourists that has never been on the market before.

"These pictures were directly acquired by Robert Lockhart, who was Hunter's gilder and framer and the one person Hunter would bow to in an artistic argument about how a painting should be presented or framed."

Hunter was one of the four stars of the Scottish Colourist school of art, along with SJ Peploe, JD Fergusson and FCB Cadell. Primarily self-taught, Hunter is often considered as "the most natural" of the group.

Hunter's biographer, the art dealer and gallery director T J Honeyman (1891-1971), described Lockhart as "a remarkable man", adding: "He would tackle any kind of job. If one handed him a picture which appeared to be completely beyond restoration he would examine it critically and invariably say, 'Leave it to me, I'll restore it to its virgin purity!'

"Whenever Hunter had a canvas requiring re-stretching or a frame in need of repair or of retoning, he would accept Lockhart's judgement at the conclusion of a heated argument... The final observation was invariably Lockhart's 'You leave it to me'."

Auctioneer Hamish Wilson said it was "a privilege" to sell the collection in Edinburgh, adding: "Lockhart was such a central person to Hunter's oeuvre – a trusted confidant, gilder and framer."



The Scottish Art Sale at Bonhams Melville Crescent
All by George Leslie Hunter

Lower Largo Harbour by George Leslie Hunter with an estimate
£12,000 – 18,000

Figures on the Jetty Lower Largo Harbour
estimate £7,000-8,000

Landscape withered house and green shutters
estimate £5,000-7,000

Path with Hillside Village
estimate £8,000-12,000

Continental Village estimate
£7,000-8,000

PHOTO Alan Simpson



06/10/2023 Picture Alan Simpson The Scottish Art Sale on
Wednesday 11 October at Bonhams Melville Crescent All by
George Leslie Hunter Path with Hillside Village estimate
£8,000-12,000 Continental Village estimate £7,000-8,000 May

Matthews – Managing Director and Head of Scottish Art



The Scottish Art Sale at Bonhams Melville Crescent Lower Largo Harbour by George Leslie Hunter with an estimate £12,000 – 18,000 PHOTO Alan Simpson