

Lowry's only Edinburgh painting sold for nearly £200,000

A rare Scottish oil painting by "matchstick" figure artist L.S. Lowry has fetched nearly £200,000 at auction.

The English artist famed for his matchstick figures in industrial and urban landscapes painted "Old Building, Edinburgh" in 1937 when he was holidaying in Scotland.

Lowry's only known oil painting of Edinburgh is believed to show the Royal Mile with Arthur's Seat in the background, and an imaginary tower in the centre of the scene.

The signed and dated picture, kept in a private collection for over 25 years, went under the hammer in Bonhams' Modern British and Irish Art sale in London.

Exhibited in Edinburgh for the first time ever ahead of the sale, the painting attracted the attention of collectors around the world before fetching £190,900.

Ingram Reid, Bonhams' Head of Sale for Modern British and Irish Art, said: "Lowry would have been on a visit to Edinburgh, quite possibly to see some of his own works hanging at the Royal Scottish Academy.

"He would observe with a sketchbook and these sketches would be worked up back in his studio in Manchester.

"Lowry had a fondness for Scotland. However, this is his only

known Edinburgh painting.

“We are delighted that following the work being exhibited in both Bonhams Edinburgh and London to the delight of many admirers, the work sold to a private UK buyer.”

Lowry, who lived from 1887-1976, toured the British Isles extensively, and visited Scotland several times.

He painted “Old Building, Edinburgh” the same year he produced important pictures depicting Wick and Thurso in Caithness.

The figures in the picture include a mother and her children walking their dog and a man leaning on his cane, who appears frequently in the artist’s work.

On the left of the picture are two young females in green knee length skirts, which may be kilts.

Mr Reid: “In this picture, Lowry depicts Edinburgh in a fashion typical of the artist at a time when he had had early success and was really finding his stride.

“We believe it shows the bottom end of the Royal Mile, with Arthur’s Seat in the far background. But Lowry often leaned on a compositional device of a single upright building in the centre of his work and the main, central, building in this picture is probably plucked from his imagination.

“It is a scene witnessed in Edinburgh and then moulded to suit his whim.”



