

WALTER DOLPHYN

SOLD!



GLADWELL & PATTERSON

— experts in fine art since 1752 —

Sold!

Oil on Panel
50 x 60 cm / 19.75" x 23.75"
£7,250



THE WONDERFUL WIZARDRY OF WALTER DOLPHYN

At the heart of Walter's appeal is his ability to generate humour out of the smallest details and juxtapositions. While the only sure-fire way to ruin a joke is to explain it (which we will avoid doing here!) the way that Walter goes about constructing his comedy bears further exploration.

Subversion lies at the heart of humour, the success of any joke hinging upon the moment that its narrative takes a sudden swerve and catches its audience unawares. Yet achieving this effect in a painting is far harder than in a poem, a stand-up routine, or a film. Where these other media can pull the rug out from under their audience during their linear narrative this is impossible on the canvas, where the image gives the viewer all the information at once. Walter's ability to create consistent humour in his works is therefore all the more impressive given these limitations. Through a complex interplay of scale, juxtaposition, absurdity, and a clever use of titles, the artist is able to create an infectious sense of fun across his oeuvre. From the absurdity of *You naughty little lamb!* to the universal simplicity of *Gentlemen, You Won't Believe This...* Walter is able to make the viewer think about, relate to, and engage with his subject matter. A joke is just as hard to craft as a still life painting, and Walter's ability to do both with such skill is testament to his extraordinary abilities.

With all the thought that Walter puts into his vignettes, it would be easy to forget the technical excellence that underpins his paintings. In fact, his figures are often so compelling that the viewer forgets that they are looking at a painted surface, the setting so convincing that it becomes reality. Yet, perhaps the best painting technique is one that goes unnoticed, that

blends so seamlessly with the subject matter as to become inseparable. This is the effect that Walter's brushwork, inherited from his father and grandfather, has on the viewer.

While the eye is immediately drawn to Walter's lovingly rendered toys, after a few minutes of study I have always been most amazed by the backgrounds of his works. What at first glance appear to be large swathes of a single colour become endlessly complex and impressive. Take the background of *Sold!* as an example. Far from being two different shades of grey separated by a single line, they contain a huge range of slight tonal variations and textural embellishments. Just as in his detailed figures, Walter's subtle complexity hides in plain sight, crucial to the success of the work but initially unnoticed. With these backgrounds Walter is able achieve the feat of creating a setting that feels completely real yet does nothing to detract the viewer's attention from the central narrative. I think it is a greater mark of genius to create an effect that goes unnoticed than it is to make one stand out.



The Exciting Adventures of the Most Boring Man in the World, "My Lonely Nights in Venice"

Oil on Panel
20 x 60 cm / 8" x 23.75"
£6,500



"Gentlemen, You Won't Believe This..."

Oil on Panel
18 x 54.5 cm / 7" x 21.5"
£8,500

A Beautiful Sunday in the Park ("Hello Neighbour")

Oil on Panel
24.5 x 60 cm / 9.75" x 23.5"
£8,250



Bulldozer N°642

Oil on Panel
66 x 99.5 cm /
25.5" x 39.75"
£18,000





Bottled Up!

Oil on Panel
24.5 x 54.5 cm / 9.75" x 21.5"
£16,500



Corrida y Gondola (The Spanish Tourist)

Oil on Panel
20 x 58.5 cm / 8" x 23"
£6,950



The Princess and the Frog, Chapter IV (a Frog in a suit is still a Frog)

Oil on Panel
Each 12 x 12 cm / 4.75" x 4.75" (a diptych)
£3,950



"Your Haystack Or Mine?" from the Sweet Country Life Series

Oil on Panel
20 x 30 cm / 8" x 11.75"
£4,750



Hammer It!

Oil on Panel
25 x 50 cm / 10" x 19.75"
£5,950



"You naughty little lamb!"

Oil on Panel
15 x 25.5 cm / 6" x 10"
£3,950







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