

Duncan Grant, Double-Sided Study of Vanessa Bell, Circa 1915

£7,450



REF: 6189

Height: 52.5 cm (20.7")

Width: 37.5 cm (14.8")

Description

An important double-sided preparatory drawing by Duncan Grant (1885-1978), dating to circa 1915 and relating to one of his most celebrated portrait subjects, Vanessa Bell. On one side, the study is connected with Grant's series of three portraits of Bell wearing an evening dress of red paisley fabric, painted around 1916. Two paintings from this significant group are held in public collections: the National Portrait Gallery, London, and Charleston, the artists' former home.

The reverse depicts a nude, also believed to represent Vanessa Bell. Together, the two images offer a rare and intimate insight into Grant's working process and his sustained artistic relationship with Bell—his close friend, collaborator, and a defining figure of the Bloomsbury Group. The sheet's double-sided nature gives it particular interest, preserving two distinct yet closely connected explorations by the artist.

Grant was a central member of the Bloomsbury Group and a leading figure in British modernism. His work was shaped by the artistic ideas circulating among Vanessa Bell, Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, E. M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, and their wider circle. Fry's advocacy of Post-Impressionism was especially influential on Grant's development, encouraging the expressive use of colour, simplification of form, and intimacy of subject that distinguish his finest work. Today, Grant's paintings and drawings are represented in major collections including Tate Britain and the V&A, London; the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.

The drawing has notable provenance. It was acquired from the artist's estate in 1977 by a New York gallery, later purchased from a private collector. It was exhibited by Davis & Langdale Company in 1997. The gallery has a distinguished record in the field of Modern British art, having presented the first solo exhibitions in the United States of Gwen John in 1965, Duncan Grant in 1975, and Vanessa Bell in 1980.

A highly personal and historically resonant work, this double-sided study provides an exceptional connection to the creative and emotional world of Bloomsbury, as well as to one of the most important artistic partnerships in early 20th-century British art.