Easter Morning

Louis James (1920-1996)

REF:

Description

Oil on BoardSigned & dated ’63, also verso35 x 24 cms (14 x 9 ins)
Louis James, Australian by birth, was the eldest of three sons to Clifford James and Doris Mary James who were married in 1920. James was born on 22nd September 1920 in Adelaide.He attended the School of Arts & Crafts in South Australia from 1934 – 1936, otherwise had no formal training as an artist. James was known to be an amateur boxer as a young man. He joined the Royal Southern Australian Society of Artists during World War II and worked as a draughtsman in the Lands & Survey Department. James was called up and served for the duration of WWII in the 2nd Australian Imperial Force where he served in the Middle East, Siege of Tobruk, Palestine & Syria. After the war he returned to Australia and New Guinea where he suffered severe malaria, resulting in prolonged stays in various hospitals with it. He married at this time and returned to the Department of Lands & Survey to work.It was only after the war that he began to paint seriously and established a reputation as an abstract and figurative artist in oils. He gained national renown in the wake of his first solo show in Adelaide at the James Martin Gallery. After this solo exhibition,, James moved to the UK and settled in London. He became a member of the Artists International Association and worked as a draughtsman at the Geological Museum in South Kensington.In 1960 James established a business restoring antique furniture, gilding and framing. From 1963 he taught part-time at the Shoreditch Technical College in drawing and the history of furniture and textiles.James travelled to the Dordogne and became noticeably influenced by the Suffolk born painter, Alan Reynolds with whom he was great friends. He regularly exhibited works alongside the London Group. In the 1950s and 1960s he had a number of exhibitions at the Redfern Gallery, also at the Stone Gallery, Newcastle Upon Tyne. He had no less than 48 solo exhibitions and took part in almost 40 group exhibitions. James was also awarded many prizes including the Life Prize of the Royal South Australian Society of Artists, the Sulman prize twice and the Newcastle Gallery prize.His work is held by many galleries in the UK, including the permanent collection at the Tate which holds a self-portrait, two Oxford colleges and practically all major art galleries and educational establishments of Australia.James returned to Australia in 1965 and was employed as a tutor at the University of New South Wales in the drawing department of the Architecture faculty. A major retrospective of his work was held at the Bonython-Meadmore gallery in Adelaide.Louis James died on 18th January 1996.A book of his work “Louis James Paintings” by Lou Klepac & Barry Pearce, The Beagle Press was produced in 1998.