

KYNANCE FINE ART

Home from the Cup Final

Brian Shields "Braaq" (1951-1997)



REF:

Description

Oil on board Signed 'braaq' F.B.A. "Ann" lower left and dated 1977 Inscribed with title (verso) 45.5 x 61 (18 x 24 ins)

Brian Shields was born in Liverpool in 1951 and is well known for his industrial paintings of northern Britain. His father was an established artist but couldn't support his large family from painting alone. Shields' work is often compared to LS Lowry and Helen Bradley but it is not clear if he obtained his style before knowing of their work. He was given the nickname Braaq at school, due to his artistic talents, after the French artist George Braque. Shields had no formal training as he believed this would "take the honesty out of one's own painting". Shields took inspiration from his life and in particular humorous memories from his childhood. The name of his late mother Agnes is seen in graffiti in some of his paintings. From the mid 1970s he would usually put the name Ann after his signature, as seen in Home from the Cup Final, in dedication to his sister who died at the age of 21. Ann also appears in some of Shields' works alongside him. He often portrays himself in wellingtons and wearing a black and white striped jumper which he remembered as one of the few new items of clothing he received as a child. Home from the Cup Final also bears the initials F.B.A. which stands for the Federation of British Artists. Based at the Mall Galleries in London the FBA consists of 9 art societies who represent living artists. He spent most of his adult life working as a chef at a hotel in Harrogate. It was there that Shields decorated the walls with murals and signed them Braaq. This set about a search to find out who was responsible for the works. After five weeks Shields was exposed as the artist by a journalist. This was a turning point in his career, and he had his first exhibition in 1974. In 1977 he held the first of four exhibitions in London which led to The Times to describe him as 'one of the six most successful artists in England'. He also had a sell-out show in the Lake District. Although he did achieve success, he often faced financial difficulties. He was declared bankrupt towards the end of his life. Shields died from a brain haemorrhage in 1997 at the age of just 46.