

Augustus Nicholas Burke RHA (1838-1891)*"On the Banks of the Liffey, Kildare, August"*

Oil on canvas, 76.3 x 107 cm (30 x 42")

Signed

Inscribed on two labels verso- (i) 'On the Banks of the Liffey, Kildare, August.' (ii) 'A River Bank in the Summer Time/£80.00/A. Burke AHA (sic)/2 Leinster Street, Dublin/No.1

Exhibited: Possibly, Royal Hibernian Academy 1874, No.33, price £120.00 under the title 'The Banks of the Liffey'. Burke also exhibited another work with the same title in 1878 with a price of £15.00 which suggests a much smaller painting than the 1874 version.

Provenance: Purchased by the present owners at an auction of the property of Lord Edward Hempel at Fitzwilliam Place in the early 1960s.

Born in Knocknagur, Co Galway, the son of William Burke and his wife Fanny, only daughter of Thomas Tucker of Sussex. Educated mostly in London, Burke began his artistic career there and from 1863 exhibited at the Royal Academy where he continued to show his work until his untimely death at the age of 53. Walter Strickland notes that in 1869 he took up residence in Dublin with his wife Dottie, living first at No. 2 Leinster Street and later at No. 6, St. Stephen's Green. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Hibernian Academy in July 1871 and a Member in August that same year. Strickland notes that Burke "painted landscapes and subjects and a few portraits". Two of his paintings – 'A Connemara Landscape' (1865) (NGI No.587) and 'A Connemara Girl' (NGI No.1212) are in the collection of the National Gallery of Ireland.

Along with some notable portraits, he is recorded as painting landscapes at various locations including Connemara, Wicklow and Dublin, various English and Welsh locations and in Holland and by 1875 was in Brittany, and in particular at Pont Aven. He is thought to have influenced other Irish artists such as Walter Osborne and J.M.Kavanagh in choosing Brittany as a location in which to paint. Ethne Waldron, writing in 1968, noted the similarity between Burke's works 'Courtyard', 'Farmyard' and 'Chapel Door' and those of his, now more illustrious, students Osborne and Kavanagh. He was Professor of Painting at the RHA from 1879 to 1883. Burke was as much at ease painting animals as he was with people and they feature regularly in many of his titles of works exhibited at the RHA and RA.

At the height of his career his family was struck by tragedy when his brother, Thomas Henry Burke, then Under-Secretary for Ireland, was murdered in the Phoenix Park along with Lord Frederick Cavendish on May 6th 1882. Shortly afterwards Augustus and his wife moved to London and then to Florence due to Augustus' failing health. He continued to paint there and exhibited numerous paintings and sketches with Florentine and Venetian subjects at the RHA up till his death in 1891. He is buried in Florence.

€8,000 - €12,000