

Edith Martineau, A.R.W.S.



Hampstead Heath looking towards Harrow on the Hill

Reference: 10819

Dimensions:

Height: 28 cm / 11 in

Width: 39.50 cm / 15½ in

Signed l.r.: Edith Martineau, watercolour with scratching out and touches of gum arabic, inscribed on label attached to backboard: Hampstead Heath, looking/over to Harrow on the Hill, Brent/Reservoir, painted in early spring/from just beyond Spaniards old/Fir Trees in 1905. Edith Martineau A.R.W.S./5 Eldon Road/Hampstead/property of Miss Emma Lister/ Hampstead Heath, and again on backboard: E.L. Lister/bought 1905, and with provenance details on a second label, in original gilded oak frame

28 x 39.5 cm.; 11 x 15 1/2 inches

Provenance

Miss Emma Lister, Upper Heath Street, Hampstead, 1905, a bequest to her great-nephew Walter Pierre Courtauld (1910-1989), November, 1915; Private collection, London until 2021

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

Edith Martineau, together with her sister Gertrude, was one of a small group of female artists associated with the Pre-Raphaelites.

The daughter of Dr James Martineau, a Unitarian minister and theologian of Huguenot descent, the artist was born in Liverpool. After studying at the Liverpool School of Art and Leigh's School of Art, later known as Heatherley's, the first British school to allow women into their life classes, Martineau became one of the first women to be admitted to the Royal Academy Schools in 1862, aged nineteen, for seven years and then a further two.

The artist exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1877-1890, the Grosvenor Gallery, the Dudley Gallery (with many other followers of the Pre-Raphaelites) and the New Society of Painters in Water Colour. Martineau contributed to numerous annual exhibitions at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, the Royal Society of Artists in Birmingham, the Manchester City Art Gallery and the Society of Women Artists. In 1888 she was elected an associate member of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, one of only nine women. Her work was also exhibited at the Palace of Fine Arts in 1893 at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

By 1901 Edith Martineau, who never married, lived at 5 Eldon Road in Hampstead near the Heath, with her sisters Gertrude and Mary.

The Heath, depicted here in spring with the new grass appearing beside the remains of the winter bracken became a favourite subject. Wyld's Farm can be seen on the right of the composition; it was located just past Jack Straw's Castle where Wyldwood Road is today. Martineau painted the Heath's landscape and winding paths at different seasons until her death from influenza in February 1909.

She held her first major exhibition together with her elder sister Gertrude (1837-1924), also a watercolourist, at the Modern Gallery in 1906. A second joint exhibition was held at the New Dudley Gallery in 1910 in commemoration of Edith Martineau's death.

Martineau worked on a small scale in watercolour primarily and is known for her delicately painted and meticulous landscapes which owe much to the Pre-Raphaelites, and genre paintings. She worked in a number of styles, experimenting with classicism, aestheticism and portraiture. Examples of her work can be found in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. and other institutions.

Her aunt Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) was a Victorian woman of note, a social theorist, political economist, journalist and writer.