

Mary Ellen Best



The hat shop

Reference: 10935

Dimensions:

Height: 14.50 cm / 5¾ in

Width: 12.70 cm / 5 in

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

Watercolour over pencil

14.5 x 12.7 cm; 5 3/4 x 5 inches Provenance: Paul F. Walter, until 2017

This is an unusual example of a shop interior by Mary Ellen Best, whose remarkable work came to public attention in the 1980s when Sotheby's handled a large group of her drawings and Caroline Davidson published her monograph on the artist. Best's main interest lay in portraying domestic interiors and domestic workers. Born in York she drew the interiors of her own home and after marrying Johann Sarg, a school master, she moved to Darmstadt in Germany and continued to paint. From the summer of 1841 the Sargs lived in Frankfurt, in a house on the Bockenheimer Landstrasse. The birth of Mary Ellen's children greatly reduced her artistic activity.

Examples of Best's work, which she exhibited in her own lifetime in York, London, Liverpool and Leeds can be found in numerous international private collections and York City Art Gallery.

Paul Walter (1825–2017) was the son of Fred and Anna Walter, co-founders of the New Jersey industrial instruments firm Thermo Electric. A respected connoisseur, he supported the Metropolitan and the Museum of Modern Art in New York over many years.