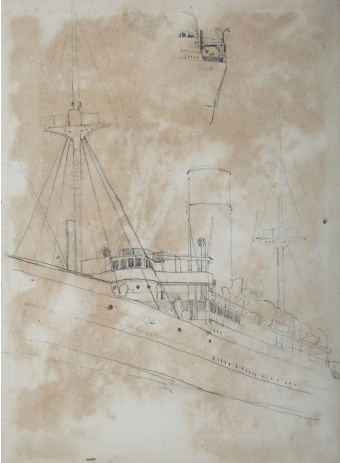


Fine Art / Wed, 27th November 2024 / Lot 100



LOT 100

"Norman Wilkinson (British 1878-1971) – A group of four sketchbooks containing mainly Naval and marine subjects, some with red censor's marks, subjects including the Royal Yacht Victoria and Albert within the fleet; HMS Verdun arriving at Dover with the body of The Unknown Warrior; Britannia off Cowes and others, some with inscriptions/annotations, various sizes, together with a copy of Wilkinson's book 'A Brush with Life'. Note: these four sketchbooks of Norman Wilkinson give a unique and fascinating insight into his observations from the start of the last century through to the end of World War 2. His pencil drawings illustrate the gathered battleships, both British and foreign, gathered for the Spithead Royal Review pre World War 1, shown from afar as well as onboard. It was the first appearance of the new Dreadnought, and Wilkinson is obviously working out the unusual arrangement of the main gun turrets. Sketches include the Royal Yacht Victoria and Albert within the fleet. Other sketches display ships under construction and in dock, together with the busy little ships boats and pinnaces. Importantly, Wilkinson was at sea off Dover to record the return of the Unknown Warrior onboard HMS Verdun, with Dover Castle behind, firing its saluting guns. As a reporter as well as an artist, he writes his notes for a moving narrative noting 'the mournful cry of the seagulls and the distant boom of the guns...'. The details of the coffin, and sailors with arms reversed are studied in detail, and the final picture is illustrated in his autobiography A Brush with Life. Another of his other paintings, 'Britannia rounding the East Lepe Buoy' is also published there, and his sketches show multiple thumbnails of these magnificent yachts under sail in what he recounts was 'a week of wild weather'. His book tells how he was summoned onboard the Victoria and Albert in 1922 when the painting had been presented to His Majesty King George V, who had been on the helm. Wilkinson was asked by the King to paint the racing mark ""a little nearer"" - which he duly did! His books go on over the decades to show naval activities and the development of ships - and dazzle camouflage, which was his invention. The censor had started work on his sketches, and red marks show what was to be removed from any final painting. In the last of these books, Wilkinson is sketching the main superstructure of the brand new battleship HMS Vanguard. Thus these sketchbooks cover the history of Royal Naval battleships from the first Dreadnought to our final battleship, quite possibly the only artist to make such a record."

Estimate: £700 - £1,000

100. Most discoloured/foxed, some creasing to some, most need cleaning.

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