



Printed Fabrics - Beatrice H. Saunders (active Between 1918 And 1940)



2 400 EUR

Signature : Beatrice H Saunders (fl. 1918-1940)

Period : 20th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Water color

Width : 38.5cm

Height : 48.3

Description

Saunders' painting depicts the inside of a fabric shop, with two shop assistants behind the desk, one assisting a customer, and a well dressed woman who appears to be on her way out.

Saunders uses a flat, print-like style to emphasise the bright and boldly patterned fabrics lining the wall of the shop. The brightness of the fabrics are further contrasted by the more muted colours used for the workbench, the shop assistants' uniforms and the dress of the seated customer.

Only the eye-catching turquoise fur-lined coat of the lady leaving the shop rivals the fabrics in boldness. Fabric shops were the realm of women, emphasised here by the only male present in the painting being the anonymous back of a man visible beyond the open door on the left of the composition. 'Ready-to-wear' clothing was only

Dealer

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just becoming more mainstream so many women continued to create their own garments or repair, update and adjust clothing they already owned to keep up with the latest fashion trends. Saunders shows the process of going to a fabric shop to pick out new material which was part of almost every woman's routine at this time. Sewing was also considered 'feminine' labour and seamstress was one of the few jobs considered acceptable for a woman, in the same way that watercolour was seen as a suitable artistic medium for women. Saunders conforms to societal expectations of a woman artist in her choice of medium and subject, however, she also takes ownership by having the only male figure excluded and relegated to the background.

Beatrice H. Saunders is known about Beatrice H. Saunders other than that her career flourished between 1918 and 1940 and that she exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1939 with a work entitled *Passengers* which hung in the South Rooms. This reflects how, despite the growing number of women artists being able to establish themselves professionally and gain recognition, many still faced significant challenges and continued to be overlooked. Being active as an artist in the interwar years meant that Saunders would have had to navigate a shifting cultural landscape and societal change- women were given the right to vote, could enter professions like law and civil service and more and more young, working-class women experienced financial independence. However, these changes were met with opposition, with women encouraged to return to their domestic roles after working in factories during the war. Perhaps these tensions are reflected in how little we know about Saunders. Was she just establishing herself as an artist by the end of the 1930s but sacrificed this to perform a more domestic role? Were her choices of subject matter, medium and style not considered revolutionary enough to earn her a place alongside the likes of Winifred Knight and Edith Rimmington in the Art History books? Though

we may never know the details of her life, the beauty and skill of Saunders' work can still very much be appreciated.