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Paul Henry RHA (1876-1958)

EVENING IN ACHILL, 1930-1938

oil on canvas

signed lower left; with faint inscriptions in pencil on board on reverse detailing title ["Village by the Lake, Achill"] and price [£21-0-0]; also with newspaper cutting and inscribed label with title [Achill] and artist's name preserved on reverse

19 by 23in. (48.26 by 58.42cm)

Provenance:

Gorry Gallery, Dublin;

From whom acquired by Mrs Anne Ledwith, 1957;

Thence by descent;

Adam's, 23 March 2003, lot 26;

Private collection

Literature:

Kennedy, S.B., *Paul Henry, Paintings Drawings Illustrations*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2007, catalogue no. 772, p.253 (illustrated)

This quintessential western landscape is one of several compositions (cf. *The Village by the Lake, 1924-5*, *West of Ireland Landscape with Cottages, 1924-5*, *The Village by the Lake, 1925-30* and *Connemara Scene, 1935-40*, Kennedy, 2007, catalogue numbers 613, 614, 632 and 933 respectively) painted by Henry in the mid-1920s and 1930s. In each case the setting is the same and although it cannot be identified with certainty it is clearly Connemara. The treatment of the terrain is characteristic of Henry's mature style as it had evolved by the 1930s. The handling of the strip of land in the middle distance, with its tiny habitation, is masterly, as is the almost minimalist treatment of the foreground. As with many of Henry's compositions, the true glory of the picture is in the sky, with its menacing cumulus clouds. Moderate impasto has been employed throughout.

An inscription in pencil on the reverse reads 'Village by the Lake, Achill' with a price of £21.0.0. There is also on the reverse an unidentified newspaper cutting referring to Henry's eightieth birthday exhibition held at the Ritchie Hendrik's Gallery, Dublin, in 1957. Writing in the catalogue of that show, Arthur Power said that Henry, notwithstanding his Parisian training, was 'a classicist' for whom 'the thing seen' was of prime importance. 'But perhaps it was the loneliness of the West which appealed to him most,' he went on, 'that country which to the imagination seems to contain so much secret presence, whose silence is more impressive than any sound,' qualities that are so strongly expressed in this picture. Also on the reverse is a label reading 'Achill' and with the artist's name. *Evening in Achill* is dated 1930-1938 on stylistic grounds.

Dr. S.B. Kennedy

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€90,000-€120,000 (£73,770-£98,360 approx).