

RICHARD GREEN

FINE PAINTINGS • ESTABLISHED 1955

IVON HITCHENS CBE

London 1893 - 1979 Petworth

Ref: CC 192

February landscape



Signed lower right: *Hitchens*; signed, dated and inscribed on the artist's label attached to the reverse: *February Landscape 1973 / by Ivon Hitchens Greenleaves Petworth Sussex*
Oil on canvas: 17 x 43 in / 43.2 x 109.2 cm
Frame size: 24 x 50 in / 61 x 127 cm
Floated in a shadow-box frame



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Provenance:

Waddington Galleries, London, by whom donated to The Courtauld Institute of Art Fund;
Sotheby's London, 23rd March 1987, lot 18
Paisnal Gallery, London;
private collection, UK
Richard Green, London, 2013;
private collection, UK, 2013

Exhibited:

London, Waddington Galleries, *Ivon Hitchens, Retrospective Exhibition*, 16th May-9th June 1973, no.45
Powys, Newtown & Welshpool, Oriel 31, *Ivon Hitchens*, 22nd August-26th September 1987, no.38
London, Richard Green, *Ivon Hitchens Romantic Modernist*, November 2013, no.12, illus. in colour

Of the two main areas of interest in this wide landscape format it is likely that one's attention will first be drawn to the darker one on the right. But its ambiguous depths and blank mystery will soon compel the eye to seek the light and air offered by the left-hand compartment. Here one travels from a hint of water in the foreground to the dark outline of low hills on the distant horizon. Once one has made sense of this, curiosity draws one back to explore further the big purple-brown area on the right and then to discover that it too has depths, obscure though they are. This alternation between the two contrasted vistas is underpinned by colour - warm brown to cool blue and back again - and by shape - the brown mass on the right, with its curving foreground of Venetian red, being an inversion of the haystack shape on the left, the two linked by a semi-circular cushion, half brownish, half blue. But this is not all. A channel of Venetian red leads the eye to the far right of the picture where another distant vista is revealed at the base of an upright triangle of blue.

The above is merely the drily analytical account of the compositional mechanics of the painting, which is how Ivon Hitchens himself spoke when scrutinising one of his completed works (and wondering whether indeed it really was completed). The affective, emotional response of the individual viewer to the painting as a whole he wisely left to each person's experience of landscape.

Peter Khoroché, author of *Ivon Hitchens* (André Deutsch, 1990; new, revised edition by Lund Humphries, 2007, reprinted most recently in 2021).