

RICHARD GREEN

LAURENCE STEPHEN LOWRY RA RBA LG NS

Manchester 1887 - 1976 Glossop

Ref: CD 203

Industrial landscape with figures



Signed and dated lower right: *LS. LOWRY 1957*; inscribed on the overlap: *Industrial landscape with figures*

Oil on canvas: 12 x 16 in / 30.5 x 40.6 cm

Frame size: 18 ³/₄ x 22 ³/₄ in / 47.6 x 57.8 cm

In a black and gold Nicholson style ripple frame



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RICHARD GREEN

FINE PAINTINGS • ESTABLISHED 1955

Provenance:

Lefevre Gallery, London [X7738]
Sotheby's London, 15th July 2008, lot 9;
Richard Green, London;
Private collection, UK, 2009
Private collection, July 2015

Documentary:

John Reid (prod.) and V Best (ed.), BBC, *1957: LS Lowry at Work*, originally broadcast on 17th July 1957

The 1950s was a decade of official recognition and commercial success for LS Lowry, with commissions from the Arts Council, Salford Art Gallery and the Ministry of Works (to record the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953), as well as the publication of the first monograph on the artist, *The Discovery of LS Lowry*, by Maurice Collis. In 1952 he was able to retire with a full pension from The Pall Mall Property Company. In 1957 a BBC documentary on the artist directed by John Reid and watched by two million viewers, showed Lowry painting *Industrial landscape with figures*, confirming his position as one of the greatest interpreters of modern British life.

Lowry is celebrated for his mill scenes and industrial landscapes with their factory buildings, smoking chimneys and densely populated streets, and often recalled the moment in 1916 when he was first captivated by the Acme Spinning Company's Mill. Having missed a train at Pendlebury station, he looked towards 'the huge black framework of rows of yellow-lit windows stood up against the sad, damp-charged afternoon sky'¹ and suddenly knew what he had to paint. The conviction never left him and his ambition remained to put the industrial scene on the map. Against the fluid, pastel-coloured backdrop of the industrial landscape, Lowry animates the canvas with foreground figures whose dynamic gestures and interactions are enlivened with touches of vivid red, blue and ochre paint. Men and women smile and greet each other with open arms, while laden shoppers chat on their way home, interspersed by watchful children and characterful dogs.

Painted in 1957 *Industrial landscape with figures* illustrates the importance Lowry placed on the relationship between the architecture and people in his paintings. During an interview Lowry once said: 'The buildings were there and I was fascinated by the buildings. I had never seen anything like them before, but I was fascinated by the people who lived and worked in them. A country landscape is fine without people, but an industrial set without people is an empty shell. A street is not a street without people...it is as dead as mutton. It had to be a combination of the two – the mills and the people – and the composition was incidental to the people.'

¹ The artist quoted in Judith Sandling and Mike Leber, *Lowry's City: A Painter and his Locale*, Lowry Press, Salford 2000, p.17.