

RICHARD GREEN

KEN HOWARD OBE RA

London 1932 - 2022 Cornwall

Ref: CL 3844

City lights



Signed lower left: *Ken Howard*; titled and dated 05 on the stretcher

Oil on canvas: 20 x 24 in / 50.8 x 61 cm

Frame size: 27 ³/₄ x 31 ³/₄ in / 70.5 x 80.6 cm

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Provenance:

Richard Green, London, directly from the artist, March 2006;
Private collection, acquired from the above in 2006

Exhibited:

London, Richard Green, *The Art of Reflection: An exhibition of recent paintings by Ken Howard*, 23rd March-13th April 2006, no.12, illus. in colour p.18

‘London is home, it is where I was born and have lived all my life. One travels the world and on returning to London one realises that this city is still among the most stimulating in the world...London with its famous range of light and weather is constantly inspiring.’
Ken Howard, 2015

Ken Howard’s paintings of London are full of life and drama. In the present work we see the Royal Exchange to the left of centre, with a glimpse of the shard above, and on the right the Mansion House. The dark vertical lines of railings, lampposts and traffic lights help to structure the urban setting in contrast to the bright yellow diagonal lines which mark the dark grey road. Vivid touches of red enliven the scene on the horizon as London’s iconic double-decker buses come into view. Sitting and sketching on the street at this busy junction, Ken brilliantly captures the bustle of the crowd as LS Lowry did before him.

In his autobiography, *Light and Dark*, Ken wrote of this subject: ‘I began to work regularly on the streets of the City of London – as London was my base it seemed the logical place, and it was a subject I was still very excited by. I sometimes think of the City as it was, without all the developments that have happened since the ’60s. I’m sure a lot of the new buildings are very significant, but they don’t necessarily inspire me as an objective painter...Although I didn’t realise that it would happen, people came out of their offices at lunchtime, liked what I was doing and asked if I would sell to them. Fairly quickly I saw that there seemed to be a market for my work in the City. There was a competition, I remember, called the Lord Mayor’s Art Award. This started soon after I returned from Italy and it was always my ambition to win it...The second year I won the first prize, and again the following year.’¹

Several of Ken’s paintings of the City of London are in the permanent collection of the Guildhall Art Gallery.



Ken Howard, *Mansion House*, circa 1971
Oil on canvas: 20 x 32 in / 51 x 81 cm
Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

¹ Ken Howard, *Light and Dark: The Autobiography of Ken Howard*, Royal Academy Publications, London 2011, p.155.

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