My People

Cyril Ross

Sold

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REF: 10243

Height: 182 cm (71.7")

Width: 440.5 cm (173.4")

Description

CYRIL J ROSS (B.1891) MY PEOPLE
Central piece: 182x257.5cm.; 71¾x101in
Outer pieces both: 182x91.5cm.; 71¾x36in.
Signed and indistinctly dated 1943
Oil on board, laid on panel, in three parts, unframed

The painting is dedicated to the millions of my people martyred in the greatest racial persection in Jewish history.

The accompanying booklet, List of Portraits, My People, Oil Painting 16ft x 7ft by Cyril J Ross, lists the sitters portrayed in the painting. The numbered key to the portraits is shown on a drawing, inset in the middle of the booklet, illustrating the position of each portrait. The booklet is annotated, I believe by 'J Browning' who has signed the first page alongside the date '1971'.

Foreword :

The painting here represents a portrait gallery exemplifying some aspects of the Jewish contribution to the civilisation of the world, and particularly to the life of this country, over a period of many centuries. There may be seen in it the likenesses (in most cases based on authentic records) of men and women who have distinguished themselves in every branch of beneficent human activity - science, medicine, poetry, art, music, literature, acting, jurisprudence, philanthropy, economics, statesmanship, ethics, religion, philosophy, industry, and much else besides. There are included in the painting some 900 portraits, but very many more could have been added had space permitted.

The Hanging Committee in the foreground are depicted as preparing an exhibition of paintings dealing with the present war, in which Jews have played their part on all battlefields and suffered untold grief in Nazi and Occupied Territory. Descriptive titles of these token paintings are given on p.23.

The criterion used to decide who is a Jew and who is not, in the case of persons of mixed descent, has been that adopted by those who in our own day have brought Jewish persecution to a new pitch of inhumanity.

If any branches may be singled out from the rest, in which the Jewish representation as shown here is particularly marked, they are medicine and philanthropy (in its widest sense). The deduction to be drawn from this fact is left to others.

CJR

When he painted My People Ross was living at Cavesham Hill. Every Saturday Ralph Errmann, then a 17 year old student, worked for Mr Ross looking through encyclopedias and books for information and images on the people depicted in the picture so that they would be based on authentic records. I have tracked down Mr Errmann and he has been able to help me with some of this information. According to Mr Errmann, Cyril Ross always said that the 'List of Portraits' was the most important thing, more important than the picture itself.

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The front page of the booklet shows that the picture was originally framed, the frame has since been removed.

The picture hung in the dining hall at Carmel College, a Jewish boarding school in the Maidstone area, I have been told for 10 years, but I do not know the dates.

Carmel College was founded by Rabbi Dr Kopul Rosen in 1948 and closed in 1997. Approximately 4,000 students attended the school for some period of time, nearly a third of them from all...

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