

Pill Creek, Feock, Cornwall, 1928

Sold



REF: 10880

Height: 37 cm (14.6")

Width: 53.5 cm (21.1")

## Description

CHRISTOPHER WOOD (British, 1901-1930)  
Pill Creek, Feock, Cornwall

Oil on canvas. August 1928.

This is the only known painting by KW of Pill Creek. It was painted at a significant time when KW joined Ben & Winifred Nicholson who were staying at Haylands in Feock near their friends Marcus and Irene Brumwell; Marcus was head of the Stuart Advertising Agency and a keen collector of Ben Nicholson's work. All three artists painted together in the same spirit, 'we all three painted and thought of nothing else. Inspiration ran high and flew backwards and forwards from one to the other' WN. KW wrote to his mother, describing St Feock as '...a very beautiful place, a little creek with pine woods and white yachts at the end of a large inlet'. Wood's description of the creek is exactly as Winifred painted it, several times describing it as '...a sleeping beauty countryside'.

REFERENCE : Whit Library, Christopher Wood files. There is a black & white photograph of this picture mis-identified as a Cumberland Landscape, noting it is in the Collection of Winifred Nicholson. (Harrison, 2 Milner Place, NW1, neg 390/24/7). This photograph was taken by Charles Harrison, which he took as part of his preparatory work for the time of the Ben Nicholson Tate (1969) retrospective in about 1967.

RELATED TO : Ben Nicholson : Pill Creek Moonlight, 1928. Ben Nicholson : Pill Creek, 1928. Winifred Nicholson : Pill Creek 1928 Government Art Collection 11680. The subject of the painting Church at St Feock, 1928, EN294, is now known to be a church on the outskirts of St Ives and it is therefore not related.

Pill Creek was painted at the time that KW's work achieved a true individualism and maturity, 'his style could be said to be formed... and he knew the atmosphere in which he could do his best work'. As with many of KW's best paintings, this work is at the same time radiant and faintly sinister. There is an unclouded purity, almost a rapture, created in his depiction of the creek with the colourful oyster boats, a couple under sail, and the almost illuminous reflection of light on the water at the head of the creek by the beach and the Brumwell's house. 'But there is also a thunderstorm somewhere in the neighbourhood'; here it is created by the leaden sky full of the thick clouds which you can almost feel moving quickly in the wind and the cluster of trees at the top of the hill straining in the breeze and the reflective dark green waters towards the mouth of the creek which set the mood

'Colour is not colour unless it is properly chosen'. KW's use of colour in this work is arresting with an almost impenetrable intensity. The colours establish the mood of the work, the combination of brutal and delicate tones appeals to the senses of the viewer. His colour perceptions are sharpened to a razor edge by the possession of a personal sense of beauty.

KW painted swiftly and without hesitation. Pill Creek is painted with a happy ease, almost insouciance, despite the passionate, the almost desperate intensity of its mood, the work of a man on such intimate terms with his craft that he finds it no longer a problem. A good conversationalist uses words so easily that they seem to flow ...