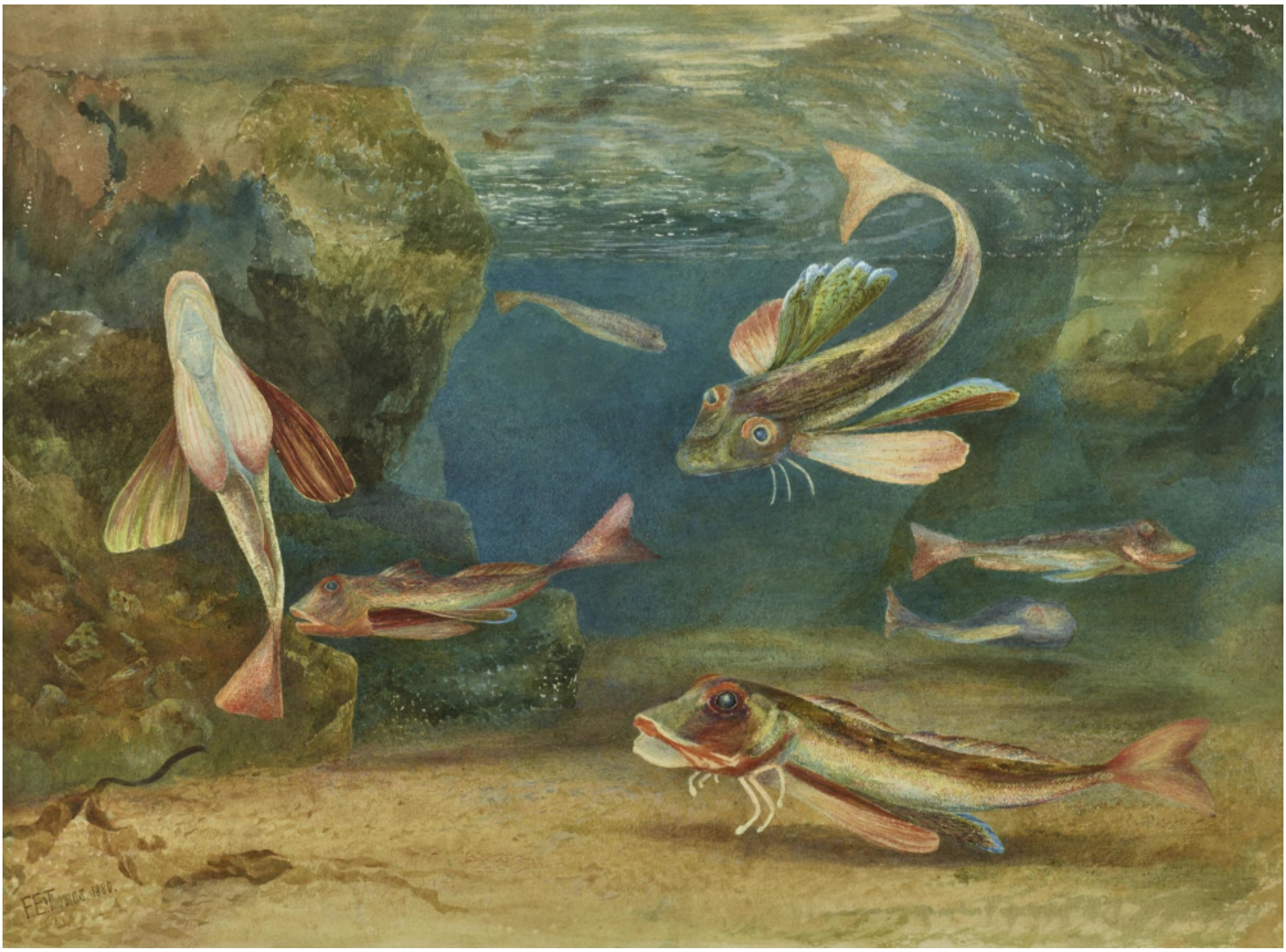
Gurnards in Brighton Aquarium

Fanny Elizabeth Thomas



REF: 2830

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Description

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Fanny Elizabeth Thomas (1851-1925)
Gurnards in Brighton Aquarium

Signed and dated lower left: F E Thomas 1880 and signed and inscribed on old label attached to the backboard: Garden of the Nereid…/……/28 Palmeira Square/Brighton and in another hand: Mrs ORLEBAR/Pakyns Manor/Hurstpierpont (3140 tel.) and on a second label: M.rs William Borrer
Watercolour heightened with bodycolour and scratching out
41cm by 56 cm, 16 ¼ by 22 in.

Provenance:
By descent from the artist to Margaret Orlebar née Borrer (1884-1953) of Pakyns Manor, Hurstpierpoint;
With Guy Peppiatt Fine Art, 2006;
Private Collection until 2023

Exhibited:
London, Grosvenor Gallery, 1880

Fanny Thomas was born in St John's, Newfoundland, Canada in 1851. Her non-appearance in the 1871 UK census suggests she returned to England after that date and in 1880, she exhibited two pictures in London, at the Grosvenor Gallery, as well as a further picture at the Suffolk Street Gallery. In the 1881 census she is recorded as living with her aunt and uncle Sir Richard and Fanny Dacres at 28 Palmeira Square, Brighton together with her two younger sisters Edith and Annie. In early 1883 she married William Borrer (1846-1920) of Pakyns Manor, Hurstpierpoint. She died in Easthampstead, Berkshire in 1925.

Brighton Aquarium was one of the earliest in the country. Inspired by the one at Boulogne, it was conceived and designed by Eugenius Birch, the architect responsible for the West Pier. Work began in 1869 and the ornate building, with its pillared and arched interior, initially opened in 1872, its roof terrace opened two years later and shortly afterwards, further attractions including a music conservatory, roller skating rink, smoking room and café. The project cost £133,000 (equivalent to around £5.5 million today). Amongst its early attractions was an octopus, with the first sea lions arriving in 1877.

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