The Dancing Party

Edward John Burra



REF: 3176

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Description

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Edward John Burra (1905-1976)
The Dancing Party

Signed lower right: EJ Burra
Pen and brown ink on laid paper watermarked Homburg
48.7 by 41.8 cm., 19 by 16 ½ in.

Burra studied at the Chelsea School of Art and later the Royal College of Art from 1923 to 1925. He became known for his large, highly imaginative, watercolour painting using strong colouring. Travelling widely, he depicted Paris in the roaring twenties and New York during the `Harlem Renaissance' of the 1930s, staying in New York for three months in September 1933. He visited Spain twice in the 1930s and had to flee the country in July 1936 when war erupted. He was deeply affected by Spanish Civil War which led to a series of macabre watercolours depicting the dark side of humanity.

This is one of a series of interior scenes by Burra executed in pen and ink and dating from circa 1930. They were not preliminary sketches for paintings but appeared to be recollections of events he witnessed. They feature groups of figures dancing, listening to music and flirting. They include `Jazz Fans' (Government Art Collection), `Scene with Figures' (Tate Gallery) and `Rue de Lappe' (Mayor Gallery, London) - each were included in the recent major Burra exhibition in the Tate Gallery, London (see Thomas Kennedy and Eliza Spindel (ed.), Edward Burra, exhibition catalogue 2025, p.62-64, ill.).

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