

# S P H I N X F I N E A R T



**Eric Kennington (London 1888 - Reading 1960)**

## **Prasnik Street, Moscow**

oil on canvas  
127 x 97 cm (50 x 38 1/4 in)

Eric Kennington was one of Britain's foremost war artists. He travelled to Russia during 1905-6, visiting Swedish relatives, and the present work is related to a number of pen and ink sketches which he produced during this trip.

We would like to thank Dr. Jonathan Black for his help in cataloguing the present work.

## **Exhibitions**

London, The Royal Institute of Oil Painters, October 1911, no. 192.

## **Literature:**

Jonathan Black, *The Face of Courage: Eric Kennington, Portraiture and the Second World War*, (Philip

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WILSON, LONDON, 2011), p. 14 (illustrated in colour).

## **Artist description:**

Eric Kennington was born in London, Chelsea in 1888, to the family of an artist. In 1908, after graduating public school in the capital, Kennington had an exhibition on his works at the Royal Academy. Before the Great War, Eric Kennington was keen on painting costermongers (street traders) in London. One of his most famous paintings executed in 1914 was called *The Costermongers*.

In 1914, after the war began, he joined the army and was sent to France and Belgium, and joined the Kensington Battalion (the 13th Battalion, London Regiment). Eric spent time at the frontline during the period from November 1914 to January 1915, when he was injured and lost a toe. In June 1915, after spending a few months in hospital, he was discharged honourably from the army.

Kennington ultimately became an official war artist, despite his bad relationship with the Ministry of Information. Most of his paintings were popular and he continued working as a war-artist during the Second World War (which has been the subject of an exhibition and a book).

Through his career as a painter and sculptor, Kennington's work was highly rated and covered a vast range of subjects, including his war paintings and memorials, portraits of Lawrence of Arabia, and images produced for the brickwork of the Shakespeare memorial theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.