A Forest Camp by WH Marsh

£1,250



REF: 83273

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Height: 60.94 cm (24")

Width: 50.78 cm (20")

Depth: 1.9 cm (0.7")

Description

An oil on canvas painting signed to the bottom right 'W.H. Marsh 1880'.

Marsh was likely an amateur artist, and the painting certainly has a naïve quality to it. Whilst the tall trees, either side of the pathway are quite well painted, the scale of the people, tents and furniture are out of proportion to each other. The tent interiors show beds, tripod tables, a fireplace with mantle and hanging pictures etc. Outside the tents there are more chairs and a washing line. The tent to the left foreground is marked VR for Victoria. A lady and child walk along the path towards the sunset.

By the tent to the right is a tree stump and its felled tree, which may be a clue, coupled with the artist, to the location. A William Henry Marsh was a colonial administrator who spent much of his career in Mauritius. He was born in 1827 and at the age of 31 was the Crown Solicitor to British Mauritius. By 1870 he was the Senior Assistant Secretary. Queen Victoria awarded him Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) in her Birthday Honours of 1881. In 1883 he became Governor of Hong Kong for a year and then again from 1885 for a year and a half. He died in 1906.

In 1864 the British started to lay railway lines in Mauritius with deforestation a result. This effected the water supply, and it wasn't until 1880 that it was decided to try and correct the problem. The above is not conclusive proof that the artist is William Henry Marsh, a colonial administrator for Mauritius but it is a possibility.

The perspective of the painting draws you in to follow the path between the forest trees but there is also interest in the naïve camp life to the foreground of the picture. Dated 1880.

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