FORD MADOX BROWN (1821-1893)

Portrait of James Leathart, half-length

Oil on canvas
Signed 'F MADOX BROWN' (lower right)
13 ½ x 11 in. (34.3 x 27.9 cm.)
21 ⅜ x 19 ¼ in. (54.2 x 49 cm.) (framed)
In the original thumbnail and reed border and plain oak flat gilt frame designed by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Provenance
Commissioned from the artist by James Leathart in 1863 and purchased in 1864 for 60 guineas and by descent in the Leathart family to the present owner.

Exhibited
London, Piccadilly Gallery, *Ford Madox Brown*, 1865, no. 30.
Liverpool, The Walker Art Gallery, Birmingham, City Museum and Art Gallery, Manchester, City Art Gallery, *Ford Madox Brown 1821-1893*, 1964, no. 39, lent by Mrs T.H. Leathart.
Newcastle, *Paintings and Drawings from the Leathart Collection*, 7 October-18 November 1968, no. 21.
Newcastle, Laing Art Gallery, *Pre-Raphaelites Painters and Patrons in the North East*, 14 October 1989-14 January 1990, no. 12, illustrated.
London, Christie's, Manchester, The Whitworth Art Gallery, *Treasures of the North*, 13 January-9 April 2000, no. 69.
Manchester, Manchester Art Gallery, Ghent, Museum of Fine Arts, *Ford Madox Brown Pre-Raphaelite Pioneer*, 24 September 2011-3 June 2012, no. 68.
Newcastle, Laing Art Gallery, on loan 2012-2021.

Literature
F.M. Hueffer, *Ford Madox Brown*, 1896, pp. 162-63, 197, 440.
F. Madox Brown, 'Self-Painted Pictures', *The Magazine of Art*, 1889, pp. 184-86.
W. Minto (ed.), *Autobiographical Notes of the life of William Bell Scott*, 1892, II, p. 48.
M. Bennett, *The Burlington Magazine*, CV, November 1963, p. 490.

Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, *Ford Madox Brown, 1821-1893*, exhibition catalogue, 1964, pp. 24-25.
R. Glynn Grylls, *Portrait of Rossetti*, 1964, p. 109.
G. Leathart, *Paintings and Drawings from the Leathart Collection,* introduction to the exhibition catalogue, 1968, pp. 11-12. pl. 7.
A. Staley, *Pre-Raphaelite Landscape*, 1973, p. 160 and 2001, p. 200 and pl. 181.
D. Cherry, 'An Annotated Edition of the Diary and Selected Letters of Ford Madox Brown, 1850-1870', Doctoral Thesis, 1978, pp. 118-9, 144-45.
A. Rose, *Pre-Raphaelite Portraits*, 1981, p. 23.
D.S. Macleod, 'Private and Public Patronage in Victorian Newcastle', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 52, 1989, pp. 195ff; p. 36 illustrated.
D. Macleod, 'Avant-Garde Patronage in the North-East', *Pre-Raphaelite Painters and Patrons in the North East, exhibition catalogue*, 1989, p. 60.
T. Newman and R. Watkinson, *Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelite Circle*, 1991, p. 129, fig. 157 illustrated.
J. Christian, *Treasures of the North, exhibition catalogue*, London, 1999, p. 91, illustrated.
M. Bennett, *Ford Madox Brown, A Catalogue Raisonné*, 2010, New Haven, II, pp. 404, 588 (frame detail), B. 76, illustrated.
J. Treuherz, *Ford Madox Brown Pre-Raphaelite Pioneer*, Manchester, 2011, p. 238.

MS

FMB, Account Book, 'Subjects of Pictures and Drawings" [Cornell University Library, Violet Hunt Papers, Collection 4607]
FMB, Household Account Book, 6 January 1864, £63 [National Museum Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery Archives].
FMB to J. Leathart, 8 February, 10 August, 3 September and n.d. [October?] 1863, 6 January 1864, 19 January 1865, 9 August, 2, 7, 18 December 1869 [University of British Columbia Library, Rare Books and Special Collections, James Leathart fonds box/documents, 1-2, 1-3].
J. Leathart to FMB, 31 January, 13 August 1863, 5 January 1864, 11 January 1865, 20 November, 9 and 27 December 1869 (National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum, MSL/1995/14/55).

INTRODUCTION

Ford Madox Brown's (1821-1893) portrait of James Leathart, 1863, is an archetypal Victorian portrait, which provides us with a window through which we can glimpse the world of bourgeois society and the mercantile-class's patronage of avant-garde contemporary art at a pivotal moment in its development. It is an outstanding picture of one of the most important and progressive figures in the history of Victorian art patronage. Brown's portrait was commissioned as a pendant to Rossetti's charming depiction of his young wife, Maria (fig. 1).

Fig. 1
Dante Gabriel Rossetti
companion portrait of *Maria Leathart*
1862
Martin Beisly Fine Art

With the exception of likenesses of his family, Brown painted relatively few portraits and the majority of these are in institutions nationally and internationally and the appearance on the art market of Brown's portrait of James Leathart is a rare opportunity to purchase a portrait by the artist, being one of only five available, and of a such a significant figure in the story of Pre-Raphaelite patronage. We assume that all the great well-known and well-loved pictures, images of which are familiar to us, are either discoveries, works which have sunk into obscurity due to the changing tastes of the first half of the 20th Century or, in contrast, safely enshrined in public collections. Therefore, it is a remarkable thing that Brown's portrait of James Leathart (1820-1895) is still in a private collection, together with its companion portrait of Maria Leathart by Rossetti, having descended through the family and has been exhibited only a handful of times in over 150 years.

THE SITTER

James Leathart, a Newcastle-upon-Tyne industrialist, was not just an art collector, but a patron and friend of the Pre-Raphaelites, with whom he entered into lengthy correspondence and who were invited to stay with the family. He was a discerning collector and, contrary to Rossetti's prediction, was not 'a victim of Art'[1] or a client to be manipulated and influenced: his purchase of Rossetti's *Sir Tristram and La Belle Iseult* (1867, Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, Bedford) was contingent upon Rossetti repainting certain passages to bring it up to Leathart's high standards. Yet he was liked and respected in his dealings with artists, W.M. Rossetti noting that 'there was no man I regarded as more trustworthy, amicable and hearty'.[2]

James Leathart's industrialist background was shared by many collectors of contemporary art during the mid-19th century, and he epitomised the self-made men who were the Pre-Raphaelites' most enthusiastic supporters. He was born in Alston, Cumberland on 25 November 1820. His father was a mining engineer and prospector, who owned two lead mines in Cumberland. He left school at 14 and worked briefly for a chemical firm owned by the Burnett Family in Newcastle, before becoming apprenticed to Locke, Blackett & Co – to whom he devoted his entire working life. He was placed in charge of the new smelting and refining plant at St Anthony's, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the factory seen in the background of the portrait. He became joint managing partner in 1851 and sole managing partner in 1852. At the height of his career, he was in charge of the largest lead manufacturing business in Tyneside and was a director of the Tyne Steam Shipping Company and of William Cleland and Company, shipbuilders.

Leathart spent the majority of his income on collecting and although his salary never exceeded £600 per annum, he was able to form one of the finest collections of contemporary art in England. Initially Leathart collected English watercolours and had built up a large collection by artists such as David Cox (1783-1859), Peter de Wint (1784-1849), John Varley (1778-1842) and other artists from the Golden Age of English Watercolours. However, during the late 1850s he gradually sold off these earlier purchases to finance his acquisition of paintings and watercolours by the Pre-Raphaelites. In the formation of his collection, he was aided by his association with the Newcastle School of Art, of which he was Secretary, and the enthusiasm and endeavours of the Head of the Art School, the artist William Bell Scott (1811-1890). It was Scott who encouraged Leathart to buy works by the Pre-Raphaelites and other contemporary artists and later recalled, 'with my advice [Leathart] made an excellent collection of works by the new men – Holman Hunt and Millais to begin with, then Rossetti and Arthur Hughes and Martineau, and above all F.M. Brown.'[3]

Although a quiet and unassuming character, Leathart was well-respected and well-connected. Leathart was introduced to the Liverpool School of artists by his friend and fellow collector, the banker George Rae of Birkenhead (1817-1902) whose son went on to marry Leathart's daughter Margaret. Leathart's advocacy of these contemporary artists was resolute. In his capacity as Secretary of the Newcastle School of Art and of the North of England Society, and as a member of the executive committees of the Mechanics' Institute and the Newcastle Arts Association, who staged public art exhibitions, he was committed to their promotion and loaned works from his own collection. His enthusiasm for the Aesthetic Movement was contagious and embraced by other Novocastrian industrialists including chemical merchants Jacob Burnett and Alexander Stevenson, as well as the ironmaster Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell (1816-1904) and the armaments manufacturer Sir William Armstrong (1810-1900), both of whom commissioned works from Rossetti and Burne-Jones.

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[1] W.E. Fredeman, *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, Cambridge, 2002, II, 59.34. Hereafter 'Fredeman'.
[2] W.M. Rossetti, 'A Pre-Raphaelite Collection', *Art Journal*, May 1896, p. 129.
[3] W. Minto (ed.) *Biographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott*, 1893, II, p. 48.

The Newcastle industrial elite's appetite for avant-garde art was fuelled by their close-knit community and inter-familial relationships, and Leathart was a genial channel through which other local collectors could gain early access to the latest pictures in London and artists could approach potential new clients.[4]

Fig. 2
The Drawing Room, Bracken Dene
Gateshead
c.1895
home of James Leathart (1820-1895)

He married Maria Leathart, the eldest daughter of Thomas Hedley, a prosperous soap manufacturer and mayor of Newcastle, a member of the wealthy Novocastrian mercantile class in 1858 when she was just eighteen, and they began their married life at 14 Framlingham Place. In 1864 the Leartharts moved to Bracken Dene in Low Fell, Gateshead and the pictures hung in the drawing room (fig. 2) between Burne-Jones's *Merlin and Nimue*, 1861 (Victoria and Albert Museum) and his *Sidonia von Bork*, 1860 (Tate Gallery). Bracken Dene was home to the Leatharts and their thirteen children until James Leathart's death in 1895. Eleven of the Leathart's children are portrayed in Arthur Hughes's celebrated picture, *A Christmas Carol at Bracken Dene*, 1878-79 (Private Collection, on loan at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery; fig. 3).

Fig. 3
Arthur Hughes
Christmas Carol at Bracken Dene
1878-79
25 ½ x 38 in. (65 x 96.5 cm.)
Private Collection, on loan at
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

[4] Leathart's influence is discussed in detail in D.S. Macleod, 'Avant-Garde Patronage in the North East', *Pre-Raphaelites, Painters and Patrons in the North East*, exhibition catalogue Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1989, pp. 9-33.

THE ARTIST

Ford Madox Brown (fig. 4), was of a slightly earlier generation than the members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and despite not being a formal member of the group, was nevertheless a very close associate and remained heavily involved with them. His work showed great sympathy with the Pre-Raphaelite principles of truth to Nature, and his early works already display the early development of some principles that were more explicitly expressed in the paintings of the Brotherhood.

Brown was drawn into the sphere of the Pre-Raphaelites through Rossetti who wrote to Brown praising him so fulsomely that Brown, by nature a sceptical and prickly character, assumed he was the victim of some joke by the younger man and set out for Rossetti's lodgings to rebuke him. However, the misunderstanding was successfully diffused and Rossetti became a pupil of Brown in March 1848, though only for a short period as by the August of that year Rossetti was sharing a studio with William Holman Hunt (1827-1910). By the 1850s Brown himself was increasingly influenced by Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais's use of intense colouring and realism. However, Brown remained somewhat of an outsider, more comfortable being an outlier on the fringes of a group.

Fig. 4
Dante Gabriel Rossetti
Portrait of Madox Brown
1867
7 ¾ x 6 ¼ in. (20 x 16 cm.)
Private Collection.

Brown contributed articles and illustrations to the Pre-Raphaelite periodical *The Germ* in 1850 and stopped exhibiting at the hostile Royal Academy in 1853 and became a key figure in organising the Pre-Raphaelite exhibitions of the late 1850s. In 1858 he founded the Hogarth Club, intended to be an alternative exhibiting forum to the Royal Academy, inspired by its namesake's independence and commitment to the depiction of modern life. Rossetti was also a key figure in the club, and it was through him that Brown first met two of his young followers, Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) and William Morris (1834-1896). Morris immediately purchased Brown's *The Hayfield* (Tate, London, 1855-56); a purchase of considerable significance given Brown's lack of commercial success at this point. Brown was already interested in the integration of the fine and decorative arts, in 1860 he resigned from the Hogarth Club when the hanging committee refused to include his furniture designs in the annual exhibition. Brown and Morris's interests aligned closely and when Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co was founded in 1861 Brown was a founder member of the firm and designed furniture and around 130 designs for furniture and stained glass. Rossetti was also one of the original shareholders in Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. and contributed stained glass window designs.

LEATHART AND BROWN

1859 was a seminal year in Leathart's patronage of Brown with his purchase of *The Pretty Baa-Lambs* (1851-59, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, fig. 5)[5], Brown's first attempt at figure painting outdoors, and in the same year he also commissioned the replica version of *Work* (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, fig. 6), which can be seen in the background of the present portrait. Although some works had left his collection already, at the time of his death Leathart still owned five other subject works by Brown from all periods of his oeuvre and which are all now in public collections. These range from the early work *Oure Lady of Saturday Night* (1847-61, Tate Gallery), the watercolour versions of *Jesus washing Peter's Feet* (1858, Tate Gallery) and *The Entombment* (1869, Laing Art Gallery), works executed when Brown was at the height of his colourist powers and compositional skills. Other works by Brown in Leathart's collection included the small watercolour *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1858, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven), *King Lear* (1848-49, Tate Gallery, London) and *William the Conqueror finding the body of Harold after the Battle of Hastings* (1844, 1861, Manchester Art Gallery).

Fig. 5
Ford Madox Brown
The Pretty Baa-Lambs
1851-1859
24 × 30 in. (60.9 × 76.2 cm.)
Birmingham Museums Trust.

Fig. 6
Ford Madox Brown
Work
1863
39 x 26 ⅞ in. (99 x 68 ½ cm.)
Birmingham Museums Trust.

[5] This work was exhibited in Newcastle in 1852, where presumably Leathart presumably saw it.

It was Leathart's wife, Maria (fig. 1), who suggested that Brown should paint her husband's portrait as a pendant to her own by Rossetti, commissioned in 1862. Leathart wrote to Brown on 31 January 1863, 'Mrs Leathart has desired me to ask you to come down when convenient to paint my portrait. I have not consented to sit but if such work lies in your way we can consider the question.'[6] Brown was flattered to be asked and wrote back in February 1863, 'As it is to be one of *the* collections of Great Britain I think the portrait of the collector as well as his lady ought to form part of it – If entrusted with it, I will endeavour to make a worthy portrait'.[7] The work was commissioned several months later and completed in 1864. Brown had intended to commute from Tynemouth, where he was on holiday with his family, to Newcastle in the September and took canvasses to match Rossetti's with him. However, due to the Browns' daughter's sudden illness, the portrait was postponed and not started until a sitting took place in Newcastle in October 1863, and Brown continued to work on it back in London. Brown wrote to Leathart on 5 October 1863 that, 'Rossetti called over … and saw it, he thinks it very like, but proposed to cover up part of the landscape with a flower pot on the window-ledge. I have compromised by painting some rose-leaves growing outside. This helps to balance the light and shade in the composition. Will you be coming up to Town soon? If so there is one whisker I wish to touch from nature – The head & hands I think will do. Shall I therefore keep it till you come or send it when finished?'[8] A few alterations were made to the portrait in 1869, at Leathart's request, notably enlarging the picture and changing the hot coppery colour of the curtain to a greener tone, which was greatly approved of by Leathart.

Brown depicted Leathart in an informal, relaxed yet confident pose, seated in his study with the source of his wealth, the lead works at St Anthony, visible through the window (despite the fact it could not have been seen from 14 Framlington Place where the Leatharts were living at the time). It is significant that the picture propped up behind Leathart is a reduced-size version of Brown's major composition *Work* (fig. 6), Leathart's earliest commission from the artist and which, at Leathart's request, included a portrait of Maria Leathart as the rich lady with the parasol. The inclusion of the picture, the subject of which is the apotheosis of work in all its forms and types, indicates the importance of hard work to a self-made man and also the rewards of such industry – the indulgence of forming an art collection.

Just twelve months after Leathart acknowledged receipt of the portrait Brown was keen for it to be loaned to his influential one-man show in 1865: *Exhibition of WORK and other Paintings by Ford Madox Brown at the Gallery, 191, Piccadilly*. Leathart, who was lending other works to the exhibition, was somewhat hesitant and asked the artist to revisit the picture, 'Owing to my being partially depressed both in body and mind when it was painted you had not a fair opportunity if representing me as my usual self'. Brown insisted on its loan and agreed 'to do anything that is possible'[9]. Brown used his catalogue note on the picture to comment on the state of contemporary portraiture and its demise due to photography and his hopes for a revival, 'The professed portrait-painter, now becoming extinct, would be enabled to return from photography to a more simple and artistic style of picture than hitherto in vogue, and on rational-sized canvasses, and assisted by photography, *now* the natural hand-maiden of portraiture, we might hope to see a school arise interesting in itself.'[10]

[6] J. Leathart to FMB, 31 January 1863, National Art Library, Victoria & Albert Museum.
[7] FMB to J. Leathart, 8 February 1863, Leathart Papers, University of British Columbia.
[8] 5 October 1863, Leathart Papers, University of British Columbia.
[9] Leathart Papers, University of British Columbia
[10] 1865 Exhibition Catalogue.

LEATHART'S COLLECTION

Although Leathart occasionally bought works at auction from Christie's or through the dealers Agnew's, he usually dealt directly with the artists themselves and considerable correspondence exists between Leathart and many artists detailing his dealings and discussions with them.[11] When Scott retired from his post in Newcastle he moved to London and operated as a *de facto* agent for Leathart, notifying him of prospective pictures and endeavouring to secure them for the lowest price, a cause aided by the fact that Leathart was willing to advance half the cost of works before they were finished. Scott persuaded him to buy Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones's *The Merciful Knight* (1863, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery). Although Leathart also sought the advice of Brown, Rossetti and Arthur Hughes (1832-1915) regarding his purchase of works, many pictures in his collection reflected his own personal taste.

After 1864 Leathart's collection of paintings was displayed at his home, Bracken Dene, Low Fell, Gateshead alongside his collection of blue and white Chinese porcelain popular amongst admirers of the Aesthetic Movement (fig. 7). However, in the 1870s Locke, Blackett & Co. suffered financial losses from overcapacity and foreign competition and Leathart was forced to sell some of his collection privately in the early 1890s. Financial worries were said to have affected Leathart's health and he died from pneumonia on 9 August 1895 at his home, Bracken Dene, aged 75. At the time of his death, he left his wife and ten surviving children an estate valued at £14,924 and the majority of his collection was also sold (though some pictures, including the present work, were retained by the family). The collection comprising 72 pictures and a selection of blue china vases and jars and oriental plate was first exhibited at the Goupil Gallery, London in June and July 1896 in the notable exhibition *A Pre-Raphaelite Collection*, for which W.M. Rossetti wrote the preface. Several pictures were sold during this posthumous exhibition, though most were offered at Christie's on 19 June 1897.[12]

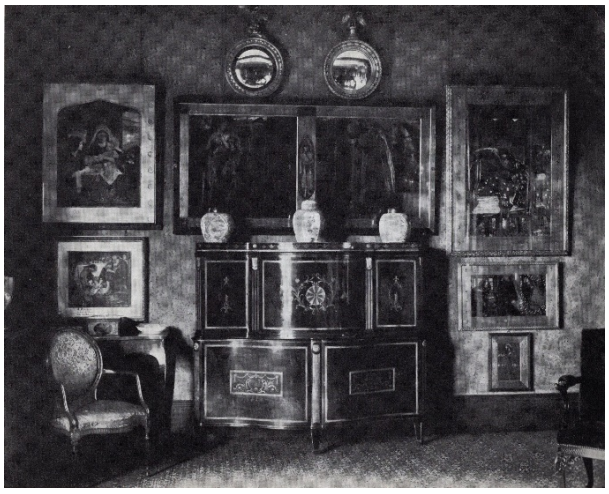

Fig. 7
The Drawing Room,
Bracken Dene, Gateshead
c.1895
Home of James Leathart (1820-1895)

Fig. 8
William Holman Hunt
The Dead Sea from Siloam
1854-1861
9 ⅞ x 11 ⅜ in. (25 x 29 cm.)
Birmingham Museums Trust.

[11] Leathart Papers, University of British Columbia.
[12] Gilbert Leathart notes in his introduction to the 1968 exhibition catalogue that Leathart's executors found at St Anthony's and in the cellars at Bracken Dene unopened packing cases containing some two thousand pieces of antique china.

The number of paintings by Brown, Rossetti and other members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood which were formerly in Leathart's collection and which have now entered public collections both in the UK and overseas is a testimony to his discerning and advanced eye. These include two works by William Holman Hunt, *The Hirling Shepherd* (1851, Manchester Art Gallery), executed when the rancour against the Pre-Raphaelites was at its peak, and the watercolour *The Dead Sea from Siloam* (1883, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, fig. 8); nine subject paintings by Rossetti in oil, watercolour and pastel, including *Paolo and Francesca* (1862, Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, Bedford), *Sir Galahad at the Ruined Chapel* (1859, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery), *Sir Tristram and La Belle Iseult* and *The Salutation of Beatrice* (National Gallery of Canada); and the celebrated picture *Autumn Leaves* (1856, Manchester Art Gallery) by Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896) (fig. 9).

Fig. 9
John Everett Millais
Autumn Leaves
1856
41 x 29 ⅛ in. (104.3 x 74 cm.)
Manchester Art Gallery.

Fig. 10
Arthur Hughes
Home from Work
1861
41 x 32 in. (104.2 x 81.3 cm.)
with Martin Beisly Fine Art, London.

Leathart's collection also included many works by artists who although not formal members of the Brotherhood were closely associated with the Pre-Raphaelites, including six early watercolours by Burne-Jones among them his early pen and ink and wash drawing *Buondelmonte's Wedding* (1859-60, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), *Sidonia von Bork* and *Clara von Bork* (both 1860, Tate Gallery, London), *Merlin and Nimuë* (1861, Victoria and Albert Museum, London) and arguably Burne-Jones's most important early work, *The Merciful Knight*. Leathart was an important patron of the Pre-Raphaelites' close associate Arthur Hughes owning nine works by the artist including *The Annunciation* and *The Nativity* (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, both purchased 1862), *The Woodman's Child* (circa 1860, Tate Gallery), *Home from Work* (1860-61, currently with Martin Beisly Fine Art, fig. 10), *The Rift within the Lute* (1861-62, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery, Carlisle), *The Lady of Shalott* (1863, untraced), *Gipsies* (circa 1870-71 bought 1892,

private collection) and the magnificent family portraits of *Mrs Leathart and Her Three Children* (commissioned 1863, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, fig. 11) and *A Christmas Carol at Bracken Dene* (commissioned 1878, fig. 3). Other artists represented in Leathart's collection were, amongst others, Walter Deverell (1827-1854), Albert Goodwin (1854-1932), John William Inchbold (1830-1888), Albert Joseph Moore (1841-1893), David Scott (1806-1849) and his brother William Bell Scott, and Simeon Solomon (1840-1905), who was represented by at least six works including *St Michael of Good Children* (1864, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery, Carlisle).

Fig. 11
Arthur Hughes
Mrs Leathart and her Three Children
c.1863-5
21 ½ x 36 ½ in. (54.7 x 92.7 cm.)
Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

LEATHART'S LEGACY

This portrait is an important work, one of the jewels of the collection, Brown himself was keenly aware of its significance, 'As it is to be one of *the* collections of Great Britain I think the portrait of the collector as well as his lady ought to form part of it'.[13] With regard to the other pictures in the collection, the greater number date from the 1850s and early 1860s when many of these young artists were at their most intense and profound, and the collection is distinguished by Leathart's preference for more solemn subjects. The quality and merit of Leathart's collection was acknowledged amongst his contemporaries, W.B. Scott succinctly writing in 1869 'No doubt your attaching yourself to the painters of Genius rather than of talent, as I may call the set I know best and whose works you buy most, compared for example to the St. John's Wood set, is the primary reason for the superiority of your collection, but the gravity of the

[13] FMB to J. Leathart, 8 February 1863, Leathart Papers, University of British Columbia.

subjects of your pictures as a rule is the second reason.'[14] Leathart's fellow Pre-Raphaelite collector, the Brighton wine merchant John Hamilton Trist, described Leathart's collection as 'one of the first in England'; and F.G. Stephens writing in the *Athenaeum* in 1873 described Leathart's collection as 'the most important collection of modern pictures in the neighbourhood of Newcastle…They are almost entirely the works of living artists, paintings of decided and high character, by men whose reputations, great as they are now, may outlast the standards of the hour, and who may represent to posterity the most living, poetical and accomplished artistic power of this age and country.'[15] The legacy of Leathart's taste for more advanced art, particularly in reference to his championing of the Pre-Raphaelites, was remarked upon in the obituaries following his death. The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* wrote that he was 'recognised as one of their [the Pre-Raphaelites] most staunch and generous supporters and it is considered that he possessed one of the finest collections of paintings in the North of England'.[16] W.M. Rossetti, writing in the *Art Journal*, noted that 'If there was an order of merit for Art collectors, the man who owned those pictures [Leathart] … might well have claimed it.'[17]

CONCLUSION

Ford Madox Brown's magnificent portrait of Leathart provides us with first hand insight into the world of middle-class art patronage through the visual cues provided. Leathart was a central figure in Victorian Art and his significance was not limited to the formation of his own substantial and important collection, many items of which he commissioned directly from the artists themselves, but was amplified through his connections and influence among other captains of industry and their own patronage and purchase of works from avant-garde contemporary artists. That this portrait, and that of Maria Leathart, are for sale for the first time in over 150 years having descended through the family, is a once in a generation opportunity to acquire a portrait by one of the most important artists of the period.

We would like to thank Rosie Jarvie for writing this catalogue note

Rosie Jarvie

Rosie Jarvie is a Picture Specialist in the House Sales and Private Collections Department at Dreweatts, having previously worked at Christie's for over twenty years as Senior Specialist and Associate Director in the British Art Department, with a focus on British Paintings and British Drawings & Watercolours from the 18th and 19th Centuries. Rosie has also worked as a freelance art consultant, writing, lecturing and advising on many aspects of British art and the British art market for museums, galleries and private clients.

[14] Leathart Papers, University of British Columbia.
[15] *Athenaeum*, 13 September 1873, p. 342.
[16] *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 12 August 1895, p. 4.
[17] W.M. Rossetti, *Art Journal*, *loc.cit.*