



OPPOSITE  
*Herb Market, Venice, c 1920*  
(detail; cat 37)

## WATERCOLOURS, GOUACHE AND MIXED MEDIA

'He [Brangwyn] is *English*, perhaps in the skill with which he handles water-colours, but he is far from being readily related to the so-called English Tradition. He is not as realistic as Constable, nor as romantic as Turner, nor as 'flat' as Cotman, nor as atmospheric as Cox, nor as architectural as Roberts, nor as delicate as Steer. He is one thing that none of these water-colourists ever were: primarily decorative.'

*Apollo*, June 1934, p 333

Brangwyn produced over 660 works in watercolour, gouache and mixed media. The earliest known watercolour, of a boat-shed (private collection), dates from 1881 and the last known, dated 1955, is of the Jointure garden (private collection), an amazingly competent work from a man of 88 suffering so badly from rheumatism that he could scarcely hold a pen. The early works ranged from 7.3 × 11 cm (2<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in) to 20 × 28 cm (7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 11 in), but in 1887 the artist produced a watercolour measuring 64 × 73 cm (25<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in) and thereafter his standard size of paper was about 50 × 70 cm (19<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 27<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in). The largest watercolour he is known to have painted was *Weekly Dispatch*, 1889 (private collection), which measured 121 × 155 cm (47<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 61 cm).

The artist's approach to watercolour painting was not that of a purist. Eschewing the usual small sketchbooks Brangwyn appears to have armed himself with Imperial sheets (55 × 76 cm, 22 × 30 in) on which he threw a mixture of watercolour, gouache, powder colour, tempera, pencil, pen,

chalk, pastel and waxed crayon. Sometimes large areas of the white or tinted paper were left as uncoloured highlights or the entire sheet was given a wash of peach colour. Brangwyn claims to have used only eight colours – flake white, yellow ochre, raw sienna, burnt sienna, cadmium, Venetian red, vermilion and French blue, although another source suggests that sepia, black and Chinese white lurked in his paint box.<sup>43</sup>

Many of the watercolours are travel documents, showing landscapes, townscapes, rivers and bridges, often relating closely to photographs. Although populated, figures tend to punctuate rather than dominate the watercolours, in contrast to the oils and murals. Favourite destinations for sketching trips were Italy, especially Venice (55 works) (see cat 37–38, 60 and 62), France (37 works) including Cahors (see cat 36), St Cirq Lapopie, La Roque, Montauban and Albi, Belgium (33 works) including Bruges, Antwerp, Diksmuide and Vuerne and Sicily (31 works) including Messina and Taormina.

Brangwyn's watercolour painting was influenced by Arthur Melville, with whom he travelled to Spain in 1892, and possibly also by the works of John Sell Cotman, of whom Brangwyn's patron, R H Kitson, was a renowned collector.<sup>44</sup>

Apart from showing a watercolour at the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour in 1893, *Weekly Dispatch* at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1890, and a number of works illustrating the devastation of the Messina earthquake at The Fine Art Society in 1910, Brangwyn rarely exhibited his watercolours.<sup>45</sup>



CAT. 35

*Provins*, c 1904–1905

(D1541) Pencil, ink and watercolour on paper, 51 × 71 cm (20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 28 in)

Provenance: private collection

The painting shows the west façade of the 13th-century church of Saint Ayoul, Provins, Ile de France. The painting has, in the past, been mistakenly titled *Poitiers*.



CAT. 36

*Cahors, c 1910–1915*

(D1847) Signed with monogram b.r.: 'FB'

Watercolour, pencil and gouache on toned paper, 52.1 × 73.7 cm (20½ × 29 in)

Provenance: Dr Gregory; Harold Esselmont MBE; The Fine Art Society; private collection; The Fine Art Society

Exh: Ian MacNicol Galleries, Glasgow; The Fine Art Society, 1956

Cahors was a favourite sketching haunt of Brangwyn's – he also produced five etchings of the town. This scene shows the side view of the Barbacane which stands next to the Tour des Pendus.



CAT. 37 (detail on p 82)

*Herb Market, Venice, c 1920*

(D2797) Signed with monogram b.l.: 'FB' and inscribed with title verso

Watercolour and bodycolour on paper, 55 × 76 cm (22 × 30½ in)

Reference: Bunt 710

Provenance: William de Belleroche; The Fine Art Society; Texas Instruments, Dallas, USA; Lucy Winterbottom; private collection

Exh: *Exhibition of Paintings Drawings & Etchings by Frank Brangwyn*, 184 Queen's Gate, London, 1924 (No 212); *Exhibition of Paintings by Sir Frank Brangwyn RA from the Collection of Count William de Belleroche*, Ferens Art Gallery, Kingston upon Hull, 1953; *Sir Frank Brangwyn RA: Paintings and Watercolours from the Collection of Count William de Belleroche*, The Fine Art Society, 1958 (No 11), 250 gns; *The Fine Art Society Story*, Part 2, The Fine Art Society, 2001 (No 31) (plus III)

Brangwyn delighted in the 'soft air' of Venice, and painted more than 55 watercolours of the city.



CAT. 38

*Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, c 1920*

(D2348) Signed with monogram b.r.: 'FB'

Watercolour and bodycolour on paper, 55 × 76 cm (21¾ × 29⅞ in)

Reference: Bunt 728

Provenance: Lucy Winterbottom; The Fine Art Society; private collection

Exh: *Autumn Exhibition of Paintings and Watercolours by Leading Artists*, The Fine Art Society, 1922; *The Fine Art Society Story*, Part 2, The Fine Art Society, 2001 (No 32) (plus Ill)

Ill: Edward Hutton, *The Pageant of Venice*, London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1922, facing p 50

This watercolour depicts the Campo San Rocco, with the apse and tall campanile of Santa Maria Gloriosa, commonly known as Il Frari, background. The original Franciscan church dates back to the mid 13th century but was rebuilt in Venetian Gothic style in the 15th century.



CAT. 39

*Kew Bridge, c 1924*

(D4713) Signed with monogram and title b.r.: 'FB KEW'

Watercolour and bodycolour, 55.2 × 76 cm (21¾ × 29⅞ in)

Brangwyn produced an etching of Kew Bridge, two oils and a further two watercolours, all of which show the length of the bridge in perspective.

This viewpoint is unusual, placing the bridge horizontally.

This may be Bunt 319 which belonged to Sir Percy Thomas, the architect of the Guildhall at Swansea where Brangwyn's British Empire murals now hang.





*KINGS OF THE SEA*, c 1924

(D1950–1965) 20 drawings, mixed media on paper, all approximately 25 × 19 cm (9 7/8 × 7 1/2 in)  
 Provenance: William de Belleruche (nos 17–35 and 117); private collection

The following 20 sketches form part of a series produced as illustrations, referred to in a letter from Brangwyn to Martin Hardie:

‘By the way you remember I lent you one or two rough heads of Pirates etc for that Turpin[?] book, can you lay your hand on them as they were part of a collection which belongs to a publisher who wishes to publish the lot.’<sup>46</sup>

CATS. 40–59 (\* illustrated clockwise from top left)

\**Old Sea Character in a Bowler Hat*, \**Chief of Combatore*, \**Lion of Samsun*, \**Ralph Fitch*, \**Bearded Sea Captain*, \**An Armenian*, *Abraham Birdvod of Ipswich, 1522*, *Captain Chas*, *Coal King*, *His Richness of Bal*, *Isac Cutts*, *Keeper of a Low House*, *Man of Maratha*, *Mule Man*, *Old Boatman*, *Old Sailor*, *Patwawantin: The Ojibway Chief*, *Ralph Gonson*, *Sir E Osborn*, *Whaler of Rye*





CAT. 60 (illustrated above)

*Ships in a Venetian Port*, c 1924

(D4711) Signed with monogram b.l.: 'FB'

Watercolour, 44 × 62 cm (17¼ × 24½ in)

The painting of Venetian boats was probably produced from memory.

CAT. 61

*Good Samaritan*, c 1930

(D1533) Unsigned, inscribed in scroll at base: 'THE GOOD SAMARITAN'

Mixed media on paper, 32 × 29.5 cm (12½ × 11½ in)

Provenance: Liss Fine Art; private collection

Possibly an illustration for a book, as yet unidentified.

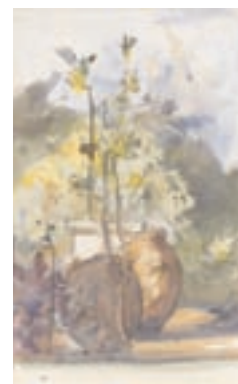
CAT. 62 (illustrated opposite)

*Venetian Canal*, c 1930

(D1966) Signed with monogram b.l.: 'FB'

Pencil and watercolour, 22.5 × 13 cm (8¾ × 5¼ in)

Provenance: William de Belleruche; private collection



CATS. 63–81

*The Jointure, Ditchling*, c 1934–1948

19 drawings, mostly watercolour and pencil on lined paper, all approximately 19 × 15 cm (7½ × 5⅞ in)

Provenance: William de Belleruche; private collection

William de Belleruche noted in his personal catalogue that Brangwyn painted nineteen watercolours and pen and ink sketches in a:

‘precious little volume which was originally an exercise book and Sir Frank filled up this little volume with water-colours painted in his garden to remain as a souvenir for Count de Belleruche and remind him of the places where most of the discussions they had together [sic].’<sup>77</sup>

The four drawings reproduced here show Brangwyn and Lizzie Peacock by the sundial on the lawn, with Brangwyn's house extension to the right; and various parts of the garden with Brangwyn's earthenware pots, where the artist and Belleruche ‘talked of Art’.