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**David Jagger** (Kilnhurst 1891-1958)

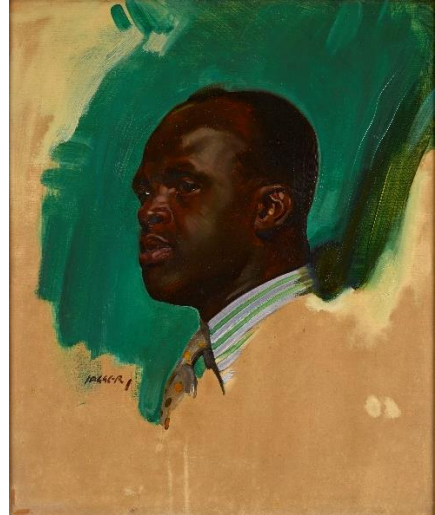
*Portrait of a man*

Signed (lower left): 'JAGGER'

Oil on artist's board

23 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 19 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. (59.5 x 49.5 cm.)

Painted in 1935



## Provenance

Collection of the artist (1935-1958)

With the artist's widow, 'Kitty' Jagger, Bognor Regis, West Sussex (after 1958)

Private Collection, Sussex, until 2022.

## Exhibited

Royal Institute of Oil Painters, London 1935 (317 for £75)

Yorkshire Artists' Association, Leeds City Art Gallery 1936 (for £75)

'The Art of The Jagger Family' touring exhibition 1939/40 (for 125 Guineas)

## Literature

*The Yorkshire Post* 11 October 1935

*The Arbroath Herald* 18 October 1935

*The Halifax Courier & Guardian* 26 August 1939

Born in Yorkshire near Sheffield, Jagger's interest in art started at a young age. He began selling pastel portraits and earned enough money to travel to London, where he soon became one of the most highly regarded society portraitists in the city. He enjoyed an illustrious set of patrons, including Queen Mary and the actress Vivien Leigh, and his reclusive nature and skilful discretion made him favourable with both celebrity circles and the more conservative social elite. He effortlessly combined a glamorous realism with a modesty that resulted in an understated elegance which made his works highly sought after.

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Jagger's wife, Kitty captured perfectly the dichotomy faced by her husband at the time:

*'Thought by many to be a fortunate life, being the painter of beautiful women was an arduous and exacting calling. One success inevitably led to further commissions and human vanity being what it is, one of the obvious pitfalls is a danger of falling into a habit of repetition, or of succumbing to the temptation to repeat what has already won popular approval. My husband consciously attempted to not fall into this error, continually trying new approaches, seeking new effects.'*

In need of a fresh challenge, and to push his own artistic boundaries outside glamorous society portraiture, between 1934 and 1938 David Jagger experimented with painting sitters from different ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds. Works such as *A Young Chinese Girl* (Fig.1), painted in 1936, and *Jewish Refugee* (Fig. 2), of 1938, the powerful portrait of a Jewish refugee from the Nazis painted at a time when, instead of welcoming victims of anti-Semitism, many people in the democratic nations of Europe showed a distrust and hostility to these outsiders, are beautifully captured in a photograph from Jagger's studio in Chelsea (Fig.3). We do not know the identities of these sitters, but, as in our picture, a similarly anonymous male sitter also painted in his Chelsea studio during these years, these works were executed with the artist's trademark vivid, energetic handling and with elements of the same Hollywood veneer as his society portraits and with what his wife Kitty would describe as an '*emphasis on the depiction of character*'. Jagger was an enigmatic character and an artist happy to work within convention yet to simultaneously turn conservative values upside down by using the unpretentious language of portraiture to celebrate outsiders, to reveal the heroism within everyone.

It is easy to see similarities with the portraiture of one of Jagger's contemporaries, Glyn Philpot R.A. (1884-1937) whose work Jagger greatly admired. Philpot was a friend and associate with Jagger's elder brother, Charles Sargeant Jagger A.R.A., the pair having collaborated on the opulently decorative interior of Mulberry House, London for Lord Melchett in 1930. Our painting was first exhibited at the Royal Institute of Oil Painters in London in 1935, at Leeds City Art Gallery the following year and finally shown in the touring exhibition, *The Art of the Jagger Family* 1939/40. Jagger retained this work until his death in 1958.

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Fig. 1: David Jagger, *A Young Chinese Girl*, 1936, Private Collection

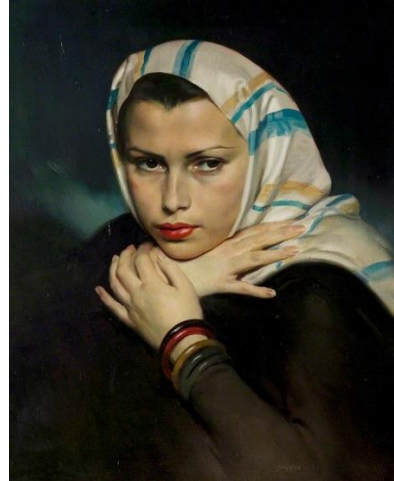


Fig. 2: David Jagger, *Jewish Refugee*, 1938, Vienna, Nottingham Castle



Fig. 3: David Jagger in his Chelsea studio

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